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EXPOSITORY LECTURES
ON THE
HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

BY
GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

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NINETEENTH LORD'S DAY.

THE JUDGMENT BY CHRIST.

He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. — *Acts xvii. 31.*

THE works of nature demonstrate the truth of the revelation, that “God created the heavens and the earth.” No power less than infinite, no skill less than all-wise, could produce from nothing, or maintain in its order, so vast, so varied, so harmonious a system. But when we search in the events of human life for evidences of God’s moral government, the discovery is partial and even doubtful. Virtue is praised. There are systems and teachers of ethics. Religion is a sacred name. There is no land without temples, no nation without worshippers. Yet there are few who are notable for virtue, none who are perfect. Religion fails to preserve the sanctity of truth, purity, and love. We cannot mistake the fact that men are governed by men more than by God. Their supposed interests, or at the best their natural affections, ramifying self, through family, friends, and humanity, decide for the most part the right and the wrong of every action. What confusion is the result? The rich trample on the poor. The poor conspire against the rich. The just man is persecuted because he is just. The vile, when successful, are flattered in their success. The calumniator stands erect upon the ashes of his victim. The tyrant grasps at other sceptres, and the blood-drenched earth quakes beneath artillery more destructive than heaven’s

thunders. Vice does often prove its own punishment! There are physical reasons why incautious excess should produce wretchedness, disease, and death. But does virtue escape? It may be imperfect virtue, but has it immunity so far as it is virtue? Is vice punished so far as it is vice? Are rewards and punishments so equally distributed as to show beyond a question that there is a power over all exact in justice? We must go beyond this life and this world for the satisfaction of our anxious reason, and faith must be our guide. God alone can vindicate his ways to man. He has done so. The ages of heathen ignorance and dim Judaism have for us passed away. The voice of God calls aloud to our souls by the revelation of his son. "Repent, ye children of men. No longer dream of security in your sins, nor think because no fire at once descends to consume the wicked, that sin shall go unpunished. Though men may boast themselves without the fear of God, because one day is like another, and all things continue as they were; though the hearts of the children of men are more fully set to do evil, because of long impunity, know this, that I, the Lord your God, your Creator and your Governor, am your Judge. I have appointed a day in the which to judge the world in righteousness by that man whom I have ordained."

My friends, careless and full of life and worldly hopes as we may be, every one of us must stand before the judgment-seat of God. We do not believe this. It cannot be that we realize it. If we did, this great thought would control our hearts, and press upon our minds, and rule our lives. But we forget it. The tremendous future is shut out from our view by the temp-

tations of the present. O that God would by our holy text this day compel us to believe and tremble, that so we may come to believe and hope !

We have before us,
The fact, the method, the person.

FIRST : *The fact.*

He has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world.

SECONDLY : *The method.*

He will judge the world in righteousness.

THIRDLY : *The person.*

By that man whom he hath ordained.

FIRST : *The fact.*

He will *judge*. Judgment signifies investigation of the conduct of a moral being, and the passing sentence upon him of reward or punishment, according to his merit or demerit.

God alone is judge. He only has authority. None can judge him, for he is supreme, and his will is the law, and all other beings are his creatures, and therefore his subjects. He does sometimes delegate his authority, as to parents or magistrates, but the judgment in his sight is void if it be not according to his law. He, therefore, is really the judge. It is, then, a most blasphemous thing to quarrel with God's doings, or to doubt the justice of his most holy law and righteous sentences. It is a most presumptuous thing to sit in harsh judgment upon our fellow-men, our fellow-subjects and sinners ; for God has said, " Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

God only is able to judge. None but he can discern the inner motives of the moral creature, and know his true character. None but he can discern the conse-

quences of any moral act, or estimate its true goodness or evil. None but he can bestow reward, or execute wrath, after the decision is made. It is, then, a most silly and rebellious thing in us to try ourselves otherwise than by the divine will, or to form our conduct otherwise than by the divine rule. Rather let us ask him to search us and try us, and see if there be any evil way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting.

God will judge his creatures.

Judgment is an attribute of sovereignty. There would be no divine government, and the divine laws would be inoperative and void, if God were not to reward his obedient, and punish his disobedient subjects. The Epicureans were justly considered no better than atheists for teaching that the divinity had no regard to the conduct of men ; and those in our time are as bad who strive to think that they may sin without God's taking note or vengeance. It is essential to his justice. For, as he is the Creator, so he is the teacher and pattern for all his intelligent creatures, whose only excellence is in being like him. But, if he never visits iniquity with wrath, or righteousness with favor, if the inequalities of this life are never to be compensated in another, his creatures cannot know from him which is the right or which the wrong. They can have no motive to do well, no determent from doing ill. Nay, his very nature is such that he is a consuming fire to all that is evil, and the light of joy and peace to all that is good. So that they who deny a judgment, destroy all morals, and would abandon the world to a fearful and most destructive confusion of chance.

God will judge *the world*. By “the world,” we must understand men, as the only moral agents in it. Each man has a particular judgment when he passes into the eternal world by death. For then the spirit returns unto God who gave it, and cannot fail to meet his favor or condemnation. Thus, in the parable, we see Lazarus enjoying his reward in Abraham’s bosom, but the rich man lifting up his eyes, being in torments. The penitent thief was promised immediate admission into Paradise. Paul desired to depart and to be with Christ. And Peter tells us that the spirits of the old world who despised the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah, are in prison. This should make us very solemn and pious in our preparation for death, for at any moment death may come and usher us before God, after which no repentance can avail for our deliverance from the wrath of God, which burns unto the lowest hell.

But this judgment is not the great judgment of which the apostle speaks. Nor will all the penalties of sin, nor all the rewards of righteousness, be dispensed until both soul and body shall receive them after the resurrection. Nor will the justice of God be manifested unto all men, except all men be present as witnesses of the judgment of all men. He will judge the world.

The whole world shall be judged. Not one shall escape. Before him shall be gathered all nations. “Every one of us must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” The rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the learned and the unlearned, the pious and the unbelieving. God will send forth his holy angels to compel every soul before him. His piercing eye shall

detect every hiding fugitive. His flames shall burn the terror-stricken, wretched souls that would cover themselves under rocks and mountains.

Yet the individuality of each sinner will not be lost in the vast multitude. Each will be as distinct, and know himself to be as distinct in the eye of the Judge, as though he stood alone and there were no sinner but he. The inquiry will be into all the actions of each, — his thoughts, his words, his deeds. For every evil thought and every idle word (Oh what a scrutiny!) will he bring each of us into judgment. Each man shall receive the reward of his own works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. As we have been instrumental in leading others to sin or to righteousness, we shall share in their punishment or reward. But otherwise, no one will suffer for his neighbor, or can thrust his neighbor into his room. Our sins are our own acts; we must bear them ourselves, unless by faith we have covered ourselves with the righteousness of Christ.

In the sight of the whole world we shall be judged. God will bring every man's work into judgment. The evil thoughts of lust, dishonest longings, or envious meanness, which we had hidden in our hearts from our closest friends, will then be apparent. Our secret sins, at the detection of which we would now burn with shame, before the eyes of the good, the eyes of our evil companions, all will appear without cunning, palliation, or excuse. Each one's conscience will then be fearfully awake. We shall feel intensely our own shame. We shall see each one the shame of the rest. The sinner will condemn himself. All sinners will condemn him. There will be no more a false public

opinion ; no more conspiracies of hand joining in hand to make the wrong appear the right ; no more standing by friends to cover up iniquities. The whole world, condemned themselves, will condemn each sinner of the whole world. Oh what infamy for the sinner ! oh what illustrious fame for the good !

God hath *appointed a day* in the which he will judge the world.

His vengeance, though it delay, does not sleep. The day is fixed. His determination is made. He is now recording our every act, and word, and thought, against that day. So that even now our account is making up, our judgment is preparing. The day is fixed. It will come, and come in all its terrible truth. When that day shall come, no man knoweth. They profane the scriptures who dare to pronounce it. But the same scriptures teach that it will be at the end of the world. Not at the end of this dispensation, as some interpret the word. That is not the usual meaning of the word *world* in Scripture ; and we have no right to change a meaning the Holy Ghost has given, when the Holy Ghost does not change it. The judgment must be after the final resurrection, for all the dead will be there. It is to be followed immediately by the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the eternal life of the righteous. It shall be when Christ comes in great glory, and all his holy angels with him, and he shall sit upon the throne of his glory. It shall be at the consummation of the things of this world, or else the design of the judgment in vindicating all God's ways to man will not be met. Ah, my friends, whether that day be remote or near, the day of our death is near, and after death there can be no preparation made

to meet it. Would that the time, wasted in curious questions about times and seasons, were spent in holy walking with God, and preaching and telling the story of Christ crucified.

SECONDLY : *The method of the judgment.*

He will judge the world in righteousness.

In righteousness. Not in arbitrary severity. God will be angry with the wicked in that day. But the anger of God is not like the wrath of man, unjust and cruel. The wicked are his enemies, but he will, even in judging his enemies, lay "judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." He will try them fairly, and only by the law he has given them, and the eternal principles of right from which that law proceeded. Their own conscience, the conscience of all moral beings, shall confess him to be just.

Nor will he judge partially or leniently. He has declared that he will by no means clear the guilty ; that every man shall receive the reward of his deeds ; that the wages of sin is death ; and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. That there will be degrees of wickedness in the persons judged, one cannot question ; and, consequently, there will be degrees of punishment ; but the judgment will be rigid, no weak sympathy for the criminal will melt the judge to pardon or reduce the penalty. Stern, unbending, perfect righteousness will determine all.

But will there be no mercy ? Yes ; but mercy through righteousness. God will be as faithful to his promises as to his law. He has promised pardon to Christ for all his people, because Christ for them hath fulfilled the law and made it honorable ; carried their sorrows, and borne their sins upon the tree. There

was mercy in the provision of the atoning righteousness of the Son of God. There will be justice in acquitting for the sake of that righteousness all who, according to the promise, have trusted in Christ as their surety, their advocate, and redeemer. Thus, even while the sinner saved through Christ enters into eternal life, the justice of God will burn the more brightly, because he pardoned not without a ransom. Vain, therefore, are all the sinner's hopes of escape from the mere goodness or the mere justice of God. Goodness cannot save him. Justice will not let him escape. There is no safety from the righteousness of God, but under the covering wings of a Saviour's righteousness.

THIRDLY: *The person of the judge.*

That man whom he hath ordained.

This we know from other scriptures is Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the man ordained mediator in all God's dealings with fallen man; ordained as the Saviour; ordained as the advocate; ordained as the king; ordained as the judge.

He is called that man, not because he is merely man, for he is also God, equal with God. For, indeed, who that is not God could bear the tremendous majesty that shall cover the judgment-throne? Who that is not God can exert the omniscient scrutiny essential to that judgment of righteousness? Who that is not God (for if not God, he must be a creature and a servant) can judge the servants of the Most High? But he is called "*that man*," because, for reasons we shall soon discover, it is Christ, God incarnate as the mediator, who shall execute the judgment of that great day.

Christ is the eternal Word; the Word that was God, and that was made flesh and dwelt among us, his glory

being that of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. It is the office of the eternal Word to manifest the godhead. By him the worlds were made. By him all providence is administered, and by him the world will be judged.

But it is the Word incarnate by whom God will judge the world. This is because

Christ undertook in the covenant of redemption the full vindication of the law. Because of the intercession of Christ the judgment has been suspended. It is, therefore, due to eternal justice, and to the honor of the law, that Christ should adjudge the full penalty of that law upon all who, notwithstanding his atonement, have refused to repent and believe, that they might be saved through the righteousness of God in Christ. It is meet that the world should see that Christ is not the minister of sin, but that even he who opened the way of righteous mercy should execute a righteous vengeance on the impenitent. Nay, his own honor, as the well-beloved of God, demands that he should be uplifted in glory and power, over all those who insulted and reviled and persecuted himself and his people.

Christ, also, has redeemed his people. God has accepted the ransom price. He has, therefore, given him his people, even all who believed upon his name. Therefore, to make his glory as a Saviour most fully manifest, the Father appoints him judge ; that with his own lips, those out of which went forth his atoning life, those from which have proceeded so many intercessory prayers, he might pronounce the acquittal of his people ; and, with his own hands, that were nailed upon the cross, and so long stretched forth in petition, he might put upon their heads the crown of life.

Thus the apostle declares that God has given assurance of Christ being the judge of the world, by raising him up from the dead, because in raising him from the dead, God the Father by the Eternal Spirit declared Christ's merit in the covenant complete, and his atonement finished.

Here is great comfort for the believer. Sinner though he has been, and is, he shall meet no angry judge. The judge is he who once was his advocate, his elder brother, his sympathizing friend, his everlasting righteousness. Jesus sits upon the throne, — Jesus, who saves his people from their sins.

But it is a huge aggravation of terror to the impenitent, that they shall see in their judge the Saviour they rejected and scorned. All hope will be at an end when the Saviour condemns. They then will be willing to give worlds, if they had them, for one of those gracious invitations, or of those hours of pleading mercy which they once scorned in such frequency. Then shall they be without excuse, for they would not believe and repent, until the very blood of the cross witnesses against them. Oh, how fierce the anger of love like Christ's turned into unpitying wrath !

APPLICATION.

The wisdom of preparing for the judgment.

We cannot avoid it.

We cannot abide it.

We cannot resist it.

The method of preparing for the judgment.

By meeting God now.

In his word as the test and rule of our conduct.

In prayer as in his searching presence.

In Christ as the only righteousness.

The folly of postponing the preparation.

We may die.

We may become hardened.

We need all our time.

LECTURE XXIV.

**THE DIVINITY, PERSONALITY, AND WORK,
OF
THE HOLY GHOST.**

TWENTIETH LORD'S DAY.

" I believe in the Holy Ghost."

THE DIVINITY, PERSONALITY, AND WORK, OF THE HOLY GHOST.

QUEST. LIII. *What dost thou believe concerning the HOLY GHOST?*

ANS. First, that he is true and eternal God with the Father and the Son ; secondly, that he is also given me to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits, that he may comfort me and abide with me forever.

THE lesson for to-day brings before us the doctrine of scripture concerning the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost ; and is divided into two parts : the first, asserting his true and proper divinity, coequal and coessential with the Father and the Son ; the second, his official work, or the gracious benefits conferred by his personal agency upon all believers.

FIRST : *The true and proper divinity of the Holy Ghost.*

This is an essential article in the faith of the Catholic church from the beginning and ever since. Devout Christians of all ages have been unanimous in cherishing this belief, not only because it is clearly taught in the divine Word, but also because it is an especial source of religious comfort and strength. It is found universally, that, as they who deny the necessity and reality of the atonement, deny the divinity of Christ, so they who deny the necessity and reality of a new birth, deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and *vice versa* ; as they who deny the divinity of Christ, deny the atonement, so they, who deny the divinity of

the Holy Ghost, deny the new birth or regeneration. Just as our sense of sin and guilt makes the divinity of Christ the Saviour precious to us, because no merit less than infinite can suffice for our justification with God, so our sense of ignorance, infirmity, and corruption makes the divinity of the Comforter precious, because none less than almighty energy can suffice for our re-creation in the image of God unto eternal life. And as the evangelical Christian is never weary of meditating on the excellence of the atonement, and of him through whose vicarious righteousness it is accomplished, though the truth be never so familiar to him, so does he delight to confirm, by repeated examination of scripture testimony, his faith in the divine perfections of that gracious agent by whom he is brought out of darkness into light, and from the depths of sin to the heights of glory. Nor let any be impatient of this discussion, because, as they think, their faith in the article before us is settled, so that they need no further instruction on it ; for, in the first place, with all deference to the ordinary information of professing Christians, it may be questioned whether there are not at least some in every congregation who have not even glanced over the scriptural evidence of this doctrine ; or, if they have, are prepared to state it for the satisfaction of an inquirer, or defend it against a caviller, as they are bound to do, should occasion require. Besides, it is the office of the blessed PARACLETE (Comforter), whose divine honor we celebrate, to teach us all things, and to bring all things to our remembrance ; nor can we hope to enjoy such great benefits, except we use the means by which he imparts them. Were the exhibition of Christian doctrine to

be suspended because most Christians are acquainted with it, the younger disciples would soon be found ignorant, and all forms of mischievous error would grow up in the church from the absence of teaching the contrary. Nor are we without reason of fear that this particular doctrine, fundamental and edifying as it is, has, especially of late, received too little consideration.

It must be obvious to you, that, though the doctrine of the Holy Ghost pervades the whole Scriptures, it is not so formally or elaborately expressed as that concerning the mediator Christ Jesus ; and the reason is, that our Lord being presented to us in a human form, and being indeed man, there was greater need that his personal divinity should be assured ; and also, as the basis of our justification should be fully apprehended by us, there was greater need that his work should be thoroughly explained ; while the purely spiritual nature of the Comforter, and the inexplicable character of the process through which he accomplishes his work in the hearts of men, render it necessary only that his agency and his office should be revealed. The Scripture answers no idle or curious questions, nor will open its living oracles for any who are not of a humble and childlike mind. Hence, a much larger portion of both the creed and the catechism is given to declarations respecting Christ than to those respecting the Holy Ghost. We may, however, regret (if an expression of the kind be allowable) that the church has not provided us with more instruction on this subject ; but if the treatment be brief, it should be, as far as possible, clear and explicit.

It must also be remembered that, while the doctrine of the Trinity is traceable by the light of the gospel,

throughout the older Scriptures, it is emphatically a doctrine of the New Testament; and that the titles of the three eternally distinct and coexistent persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, though descriptive (at least for aught we know) of the ineffable relations existing between them from eternity, are throughout the evangelical books descriptive of their several offices in the plan of redemption.

With this preface let us now most reverentially consider under three heads the third adorable person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

I. His *name*, — THE HOLY GHOST.

II. His distinct *personality*.

III. His true *divinity*.

I. His name : — THE HOLY GHOST.

Ghost and *spirit* are, in our English Scriptures, synonymous and interchangeable terms. Thus (Luke xxiii. 46) we read: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit*; and having said thus, he gave up the *ghost*." The original for both words is the same (compare the Greek of Matt. xxvii. 50, and of John xix. 30). *Ghost* is a purely English word; *spirit*, a Latin word anglicized; and both translate a Hebrew word (רוּחַ *ruah*), which, when applied to living beings, is, throughout the Old Testament, translated *spirit*. Both the Hebrew and Greek terms are figurative, the Hebrew signifying primarily *wind*, and the Latin *breath*, and both are intended to express the immaterial or unsubstantial nature of the class of being which we call spirit. In those languages, no nearer approach could be made to a designation of existence not bodily. The sound of the words shows their origin, — *ruah*

resembling that made by the wind ; *spi-ritus* that made by the breath. Our English word ghost seems to be radical and primary ; at least its etymology is now too obscure to be traceable. It is possible that it was adopted for the same reason of sound, *ghos-t*, or *gheis-t*, though the conjecture is very doubtful, many English words, having no relation to wind or breath, having the same sibilant sound. Certain it is, that, while the Hebrew word is *wind*, and the Latin *breath*, the English ghost is never used but to signify either the spirit of man (and that after its separation, or at the moment of its separation, from the body) and the adorable HOLY SPIRIT, or HOLY GHOST. Spirit is also used in both testaments for an extraordinary faculty, as a spirit of prophecy, or a spirit of divination, and as Daniel is said to have had “an excellent spirit” (compare Dan. v. 12, and vi. 3) ; and again for a prevailing temper or disposition, as a spirit of fear, or of bondage, or of the world, or of meekness, or of heaviness ; and there are other uses of the term, which need not be cited. No such use, however, is made of our word ghost, which has this advantage, that it not only translates the original, but gives the exact idea in the venerable name of the Holy Ghost. Still, as it is not the word in the original, we can avail ourselves of it only as an explicative. When, therefore, the Scriptures, or we, following the Scriptures, speak of the infinitely glorious Third Person of the Trinity as the HOLY GHOST, or SPIRIT, it is expressive of his simple essence as a living, intelligent, active being, without body or material substance, as when our Lord says : “ God is a spirit ; ” and, again, when the disciples were affrighted on his appearance among them after his resurrection, “ supposing that

they had seen a spirit," "he said unto them: . . . Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have."

But he is termed **THE HOLY SPIRIT** to distinguish him by that epithet emphatically from all created spirits, which, at their best estate, are infinitely below him in holiness, and capable of sin. He is infinitely, essentially, and unchangeably holy.

But, as The Third Person has this infinitely holy spirituality of essence (or being) in common with the First and Second Persons, it may be asked: Why he is specially and only designated as **THE HOLY SPIRIT** or **GHOST**? This may be at least partially (for there must be mysteries here into which we cannot enter) and satisfactorily answered from the character of the operations specially attributed to him, and particularly his work in believers; of which we shall soon have occasion to speak more at large. **THE FATHER**, throughout the development of the divine purposes, is exhibited as the representative of the godhead, directing and acknowledging the several operations. It is his will, as the will of the godhead, which is through all; but when the godhead speaks or visibly acts, it is ever by the Second Person or the Son; who, for this reason, is called "the **WORD**;" "the brightness (or shining forth) of his glory, and the express image (or open representation) of his person (or existence)." So, when the godhead acts silently, invisibly, and efficiently (that is carrying into effect or consummately) the divine purposes as manifested and operated by the Word, it is by the Holy Ghost, who acts wholly and solely in a purely spiritual manner. Especially, as we

said, is this the case with his divine work in the souls of believers, and in their bodies as related to their souls in the Christian life. All his effects there (we say effects, for all his works are effects, not preparatory or instrumental processes) are noiseless and invisible, or purely spiritual, as “quickenings,” “converting,” “convincing,” “enlightening,” “strengthening,” “sanctifying.” Hence is he made known unto us as the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. The name is also characteristic of the mode by which he proceeds from the Father. By the Son the Father *speaks*; but the Holy Ghost, in answer to the prayer of the Son, is *breathed* or spiritually sent through the words and the works of the Son, to effect their purposes. Thus the Saviour not only spake to the disciples after his resurrection, but, by the mediatorial prerogative, which was then his, “he *breathed* upon them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” This breathing, however, was only a type or perceptible sign of the spiritual method by which the Holy Ghost is imparted, and for the convincing of the disciples not yet weaned from the habit of sensible manifestations under the old law; so was also the shape of fire hovering and descending like a dove on the head of Christ, as he came up from his baptism by John, and “the rushing mighty wind” that “filled the place” where the disciples were sitting at the Pentecost, and the “cloven tongues like as of fire” that “sat upon each of them.” For the Holy Ghost, being pure spirit, cannot be breath, or wind, or fire; though each of those elements may be employed by divine pity of our weakness to represent in a lively manner his mysterious, mighty, and purifying influences. And you will observe that all the effects

wrought simultaneously with those perceptible exhibitions, were spiritual. The baptism by fire was the anointment of our Lord's humanity with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, "the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" according to Isaiah's prophecy. So with the gifts to the disciples at the Pentecost. Their tongues, or any of their corporeal faculties, were not altered; but through the energies of the Holy Ghost within them, they had new spiritual faculties to use them in the divine service. There is but one work or effect of the HOLY GHOST, which was not apparently of this purely spiritual character, and that was the conception of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost; but the mysteries of the incarnation are far beyond the limits of our inquiry. The effects wrought in physical nature by the Spirit of God at the beginning of our system, are to be regarded as a gigantic type of the new spiritual creation in Christ Jesus;* and even in them the operation of the Spirit was in giving efficiency to the Will uttered by the Word; for, at each step of the process, we read that the Lord said, Let the thing be. There was a Trinity in the creation, as, indeed, the learned Jews failed not to perceive, though they understood not the doctrine and had not the term,—the Will, the Word, and the Energy; the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. But, as we observed in our preface, it is with reference to the plan of redemption that the names by which the three persons of the godhead are made known to us, are used in the evangelical writings.

II. The distinct *personality* of the HOLY GHOST.

* In both cases it is giving *life* which is immaterial.

The testimony of the Scriptures is of such a kind, that if we prove by it the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost, his divinity must be acknowledged as a necessary consequence. Hence, those who object to the belief that the HOLY GHOST is the third coequal person of the Trinity, are divided into two classes: one, like the Arians, considering that sacred name to signify a mere influence of God; the other, like the Sabellians, considering it to be another title of the Father. Had we time, it would be well to examine and refute both these heresies in detail, but such particularity is not required. It will appear from the use we shall make of Scripture-testimony, that the HOLY GHOST is *a being*, not an accident or quality or mode of being; an *agent*, not an action, and an agent distinct from the two other divine agents,* Father and Son; and, also, that will, affection, action, and authority are predicated of (or ascribed to) him. Proof of these several points demonstrate his distinct personality.

1. In the first place, it is remarkable, that, while the Greek πνεῦμα, with its article and qualifying adjective τὸ ἅγιον, is in the neuter gender, the pronouns and other relatives to it are in the masculine, showing, as any one acquainted with language knows, that the Spirit referred to is a person and not a *thing*: “But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, *whom* the Father will send in my name, *he* shall teach you all things.” Again, “If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you; and when *he* is come, *he* will reprove the world of sin,” etc. Αὐτὸν: Ἐχεινος. Such language clearly designates, not

* Heber's Bampton Lectures, Lect. I. p. 46.

an influence or an effect, but a distinct, personal, intelligent agent ; besides which, Comforter is a personal appellation.

2. Personal properties are ascribed to him.

a. Will. As in 1 Cor. xii. 4–11, where the apostle, having described the “diversities of gifts” and “administrations,” says : “All these worketh (energizeth) that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

b. Knowledge. As 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11 : “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God ; for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man (no one) but the Spirit of God.” So, also, our Lord (John xiv. 26) : “He shall teach you all things ;” therefore, he knows all things.

c. Affections. Rom. xv. 30 : “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the *love* of the Spirit.”

d. Power. Rom. xv. 13 : “That ye may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost ;” and xix. 12, “through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

e. Liableness to offence and resistance. Matt. xii. 31, 32 : “All other sin and blasphemy (blasphemy is insult to God) may be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (or blasphemy of the Spirit) shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come.” And Acts v. 3, 4,

where Peter says to Ananias: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Again, 9th: "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" So, also, the martyr Stephen, vii. 51: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye;" and the apostle (Ephes. iv. 30): "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God; whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

3. Personal acts are ascribed to him.

Instances of this are very numerous, and it is impossible to make any candid reader of the Bible believe that the Holy Ghost is, in nearly every passage where his operations are referred to, spoken of otherwise than as a personal agent. "Moving," "striving," "quickening," "descending," "testifying," "convincing," "interceding," and many other actions that occur to your memory, all belong to a personal agent. Take two passages for examples: Acts xiii. 2, 4. "The Holy Ghost said: Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. . . . So they, being sent of the Holy Ghost, departed." Acts viii. 39, in the account of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion, we read that "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." But especially his personal agency is asserted in the principal divine works of our creation and redemption.

Gen. i. 2: "In the beginning the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."

In the incarnation he overshadowed the Virgin.

At our Lord's entrance upon his official work, the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon him, as he came up from his baptism by John, according to the prophecy

of Isaiah that "the Spirit of the Lord" would anoint him as the Saviour.

In his death (Heb. ix. 14) he, "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."

In his resurrection, he was quickened by the power of the Spirit (Eph. i. 20 ; ii. 1), and was "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. i. 4) ; see, also, 1 Peter iii. 18 ; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

So, also, in the application of the benefits purchased by the Mediator to the souls of believers, which is everywhere ascribed to the Holy Ghost.

In their regeneration or quickening with a divine life ; they are born of the Spirit, and quickened by the Spirit, (John iii. 3 ; Ephes. ii. 1.)

In their adoption : "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," (Rom. viii. 14-17.)

In their sanctification : "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?" (iii. 16.)

In their graces : Faith, hope, love, strength, comfort, assurance, and all the blessed, holy consequences flowing from them, which we know, without now citing texts sufficiently familiar, are all ascribed to the direct agency of the Holy Ghost, and are summed up in the apostolical benediction : "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all ;" "the communion of the Holy Ghost" there signifying participation in all the benefits of the Holy Ghost, promised to and bestowed upon all believers.

4. Lest, however, some might yet, though in the face of all these proofs to the contrary, continue to assert that these many mentions of the Holy Ghost refer only to acts of God the almighty Father, and do not imply distinct personalities in the godhead, let us call to our minds several passages in which such distinctness is manifest. Thus, at the unction of our Lord, (Luke iii. 22,) we read: "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." Here is the Father speaking from heaven to the Son on earth, and the Holy Ghost descending from heaven on the Son.

Again, in the divinely prescribed formula of baptism: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," (the three present at the baptism of our Head.) Nothing but the extremest prejudice could bring one to believe that these several names belong to only a single person, and do not intend three distinct persons in the godhead.

So with the apostolical benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the grace of his purchase,) the love of God, (the Father representing the propitiated godhead,) and the communion of the Holy Ghost, (or participation in the energies of the Holy Ghost by whom the grace is applied to us, and "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts,") which is according to the interpretation given in Ephes. ii. 18: "For through him (our Lord Jesus) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

Thus our Lord (John xiv. 16): "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, (mark, not another Comfort, but another Comforter,

an agent like himself,) that he may abide with you forever." Again, 26: "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." Here is the Son asking the Father that he would send another personal Comforter.

We might heap texts upon texts to prove the distinct personality of the HOLY GHOST, but these specimens of the several classes of proofs are quite enough to establish the doctrine.

III. His true *divinity*.

This has, in reality, been asserted by many of the texts cited under the former heads, but is corroborated by several classes of scriptural proofs, some from each of which may be added.

1. There are many places where the name of God is used interchangeably with that of the *Holy Ghost*, or Spirit of God. Thus:—

Isaiah vi. 8, 9, the prophet says: "I heard the voice of the LORD saying, . . . Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed but understand not; and see ye indeed but perceive not," &c. The apostle (Acts xxviii. 25) quoting this passage says: "Well spake the HOLY GHOST by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and understand not; and seeing ye shall see, and perceive not," &c.

So the Psalmist, xcv. 8–11, speaks of the people tempting and proving the LORD; and this is termed by the martyr Stephen a resisting of the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51): "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did so do ye."

Peter, in the condemnation of Ananias (Acts v. 3, 4), says first: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" and then: "Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God."

In the annunciation by the angel (Luke i. 35): "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

The apostle Paul declares, (2 Tim. iii. 16,) "that all scripture is given by inspiration of God." The apostle Peter, (2 Pet. i. 21,) that "prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. Attributes transcendently divine are given to the HOLY GHOST.

The offices ascribed to him imply supreme perfections. For how can he who "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God," be other than infinite; or he who teacheth all things, otherwise than omniscient; or he who dwells at one and the same time in all believers, otherwise than omnipresent; or he who is the author of life and the worker of all miracles, otherwise than omnipotent; or he who was before all things and continueth in heaven the sanctifier of the church, otherwise than eternal? So we find him denominated emphatically "the eternal Spirit," "the Spirit of wisdom," "the Spirit of life," "the Spirit of power," "the Spirit of glory." The Epistle to the Ephesians, in its doctrinal portion, is wholly taken up with the "mighty working," or sovereign operations of the Holy Ghost, under various appellations expressive of an all-pervading energy.

3. So with the names of God, which are given to him, as has been shown in aforesaid texts and many others.

4. And divine homage is claimed for him. Paul swears by him, or protests appealing to him as men do to God in a solemn oath. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." Blasphemy is a term especially and only signifying insult to God; yet, as we have seen, sin against the Holy Ghost is the worst kind of blasphemy. The body inhabited by the Holy Ghost is a temple of God, to defile which is sin against the indwelling divinity. So with the formula of baptism, and the apostolical benediction.

5. The same consummated acts of God are ascribed to each of the three divine persons. As the incarnation of Christ, who was sent of the Father, who came, and who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; his crucifixion; when "it pleased the Father to bruise him;" when he "gave himself a ransom for many;" and "offered himself through the eternal Spirit;" his resurrection, when the Father raised him up, he rose, and was quickened by the Holy Ghost. So with the correspondent acts of divine grace to believers in Christ.

In a word, unless we deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, which we have seen is to deny the Scripture, he must be considered a divine person, or God.

SECONDLY: *The official work of the Holy Ghost; or the benefits conferred by his personal agency upon all believers.*

"That he is also given me to make me by a true

faith partaker of Christ and all his benefits ; that he may comfort me, and abide with me forever.”

The operations of the Holy Ghost are distinguished by theologians as extraordinary and ordinary. The extraordinary are his operations on persons selected for special ministries in the church, who, therefore, need to be endowed with peculiar gifts : as the prophets, leaders, and teachers of ancient Israel, who were employed by the Holy Ghost, and certified by divine proofs, to make known the will of God ; so, the apostle Peter says : “ The prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost : ” and the apostles of the New Testament, who were employed and certified in like manner to make further revelations of the truth as it is in Jesus. The compilation of their writings, or such of them as God has seen fit to select, which we have in the sacred Scriptures, constitutes the word of God to us, — our sole and supreme and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The miraculous powers of the apostles and other eminent members of the primitive church, such as healing the sick, speaking with various tongues, were the signs that God was with them in their work of establishing Christianity, and are called “ gifts of the Holy Ghost.” When the canon of Scripture was complete, and the church fairly established, these extraordinary operations of the Holy Ghost ceased, there being no longer any need of them.

The ordinary operations of the Holy Ghost are those which he performs toward men under the teaching of the gospel, but especially towards Christians. For, although the Catechism here speaks only of his work in believers, (because it is rather a catechism of Christian

experience than one of systematic theology), there are offices of the Spirit accompanying the truth toward unregenerate men : such as causing them, in some degree, to feel the force of the truth, to see the wrong of sin, to dread the wrath of God, and to acknowledge the necessity of religion. This is called by several scriptures “the striving of the Holy Ghost” (“my Spirit shall not always strive with men”), because it is exerted upon those who resist his merciful influences. So the martyr Stephen : “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ; as your fathers did, so do ye ;” and the apostle Paul, using another figure : “Quench not the Spirit.” These operations in men who, notwithstanding, reject the gospel, resemble those which he directs toward the elect, but differ in their effect, the latter being always efficient to salvation, the former efficient in greater condemnation ; as the design differs, in the one class being the full adoption of Christ’s people, in the other being the vindication of the divine truth and justice. Hence they are sometimes described as the resistible and the irresistible graces of the Spirit.

Our lesson confines us to the work of the Holy Ghost in those who are saved, which is stated in three particulars : 1. A participation of Christ and all his benefits. 2. Religious comfort. 3. Eternal indwelling.

1. A participation of Christ and all his benefits.

The Holy Ghost, as has before been shown, is, according to the plan of redemption, the agent by whom the purpose of the Father, and the mediatorial work of the Son, are made efficient. Thus, it is the purpose of the Father (representing the Godhead) to

save; the Son, by his mediatorial work, provides the method of salvation, and the Holy Ghost effects the purpose of God by the application of the work of Christ to the sinner.

a. The redemption proceeds upon a system of representation. The sinner must be covered by the Saviour's suretyship: until he is thus in Christ, he is exposed to the wrath of God and all its terrible evils, but when in Christ, he enjoys through Christ all that is necessary for everlasting life, as a member of the body of which Christ is the head. Union to Christ, therefore, must be first; the benefits of grace are consequential. So the Catechism, "The Holy Ghost . . . is given me to make me by a true faith partaker of Christ." Here the parallel between the history of Christ and that of each of his people is remarkable. Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost. The life of the Son of God in the flesh was begun by the efficient action of the Holy Ghost; the life of the Christian in Christ must be begun by the power of the Holy Ghost. "Except a man be born again," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Of course this is figurative language, but most expressive. It implies that a new spiritual or moral or religious life is given to the soul which before was dead to all spiritual things, and that it is given or implanted by the gracious power of the Holy Ghost. This act of the Holy Ghost is, therefore, the beginning of our Christian life. Before the Holy Ghost thus acts upon our souls, we can, as regards spiritual things,

know nothing, for we are without perception ; feel nothing, for we are without sense ; do nothing, for we are without strength. Now the method of imparting this new life, which can come only through Christ, and be exercised only in Christ, is not arbitrary, but is by bringing us to a union with Christ. Our Lord himself compares it to a grafting of a branch (living indeed, as we all live before regeneration, but in an evil life) upon a good stem, which speedily sends through it its own better life. Christ is the stem, we are the branches ; the Holy Ghost is the ingrafter. We cannot graft in ourselves, Christ does not graft us in, but the Holy Ghost, bringing us close to Christ, makes us partakers of Christ's life. Thus again, the instrument of regeneration by the Holy Ghost is the truth of Christ: " Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

It may be asked if there be not a divine work on the soul itself necessary before the word can have an effect, inasmuch as we are utterly insensible to truth before the new life is given ? Doubtless we are so insensible, until by the Spirit we are regenerated ; but doubtless, also, the Holy Ghost works always as the Spirit of Christ, through whose merit alone the giving of the new life is justified ; nay, the life given is the life of Christ ; Christ's life in us ; " Christ in us the hope of glory ;" " Christ formed in us." We may not limit the sovereign power of the Holy Ghost ; and that he does sometimes sanctify children from the womb, grafting them into Christ before they can understand the truth, we should not dare to deny ; but it is certain that the Holy Spirit, with persons of understanding, ever and

only works by the truth. He prepares the soil for the seed, and the seed for the soil ; but the sowing and the preparation of the soil, so far as we can see, go together. Nay, there is a penetrating fitness in the word of God, whence it is called “ the sword of the Spirit ; ” and “ the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hence, also, the necessity of “ preaching the gospel to every creature,” for it is when Christ is lifted up that “ he draws men unto him ” by his Spirit. But the sword must be wielded and directed by the almighty hand of the Spirit. So the preaching of the gospel ever precedes the conversion of sinners. Then, on the other hand, the soul receives the gospel, and life through the gospel by faith ; and faith is a personal act, though a gift of God. So our Lord : “ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; ” and again, “ He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; ” and several scriptures : “ The just shall live by faith.” Which, then, precedes in regeneration : the quickening of the soul, in order to its faith, or the application of the gospel to the soul to draw forth its faith ? Pardon me, my questioning friend, if I say that there is a curious inquisitiveness here that should be checked, because the Scripture has not explained the mystery to us. Contending theologians have spent a world of metaphysics on this subject in vain, except to show the weakness of the strongest. All generation is a mystery, — life in its beginning and its actings is ever a mystery. Why, then, should we ask respecting spiritual life, the regeneration

of the soul, “how can these things be?” It is enough for us to know that the Holy Ghost alone regenerates the sinner by uniting him to the life of Christ; or, as our Catechism has it, by making us partakers of Christ; and that the union is effected by faith, which is his work. “He makes me, by a true faith, partaker of Christ.” For faith is the first acting of the new-born creature, even faith clinging to Christ and drawing from him the life he sends through the soul.

b. Faith is the bond, if I may so speak, of the ingrafting, and the ingrafting is the work of the Holy Ghost; but through faith also the Holy Ghost carries on the work of salvation which is by Christ. Christ, the stem, is the treasury of the Holy Spirit’s grace, and in consequence of the ingrafting, the regenerated soul is made partaker of Christ’s benefits, that is, the benefits which Christ has purchased and extends to the believer.

Christ was not only conceived of the Holy Ghost, but, also, when he publicly assumed his office of our representative, the Holy Ghost came down upon him, and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven, saying: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Mark, he speaks not thus of the Son in his original divinity alone; there were no need for such testimony; but of the Son incarnate, as our head and elder brother and representative. He adopted, — or, if you like not the term, seeing that the human nature of our Lord was begotten by the Holy Ghost, — he acknowledged the man Christ Jesus as his Son, with the Son who had been ever from eternity his only begotten.

So the *first* benefit we receive from our union to

Christ, is adoption of the Father, a participation of the sonship of Christ. How can it be otherwise, since the believer is in Christ, the Son, than that he must also be a son? He is made one with Christ, a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, deriving from Christ the same life Christ has, life derived from his sonship to God. Hence the Holy Ghost in this work is styled "the Spirit of adoption," and is said to be "in our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying, 'Abba, Father.'"

We are permitted, nay, urged by the Spirit of Christ within us to go to God, asking and expecting to receive, as dear children, all the blessings which God loves to bestow upon Christ his Son, for those who are sons in him. Not only for this life, but infinitely more for the life to come, may we look for these gracious participations with Christ. Hear the apostle: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby ye cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." When Christ was on earth, he obeyed the Father through all temptation and suffering, deriving strength from his Father through prayer; now that he is in glory, he lives in full satisfaction at the right hand of his Father. So, beloved brethren, if we have the evidence of being in Christ by the power of his Spirit in us, making us obedient through all trial, and prayerful in a constant dependence upon God, we have the evidence of our adoption by God, and the earnest of a participation in

Christ's everlasting joy. Trial is but an evidence of our legitimacy, and of our Father's faithfulness educating us to go up higher even to his holy presence among the angels. But of all the blessings of this adoption, time would fail us to speak.

When the Father acknowledged our Lord to be his Son, he shed down upon him the Holy Ghost; and this was in accordance with the prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." When that Spirit came down, it returned not again but rested upon Christ, entering as it were into his blessed person and abiding there, as the animating spirit of all, of each of his members. These, then, are the other inseparable benefits of union with Christ.

"The spirit of wisdom and understanding." So the apostle prayed for his brethren, and for us, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto "them" the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, (Christ,) the eyes of "their" understanding being enlightened, that "they" might know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Knowledge of divine truth in Christ is given unto us by participation with Christ the Word and the wisdom of God, and knowledge which we could not acquire until gifted with new sight, or see even with our opened eyes unless it were presented to us by the Spirit of Christ. "He shall take," said the Master when promising "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," "of the things of the Father and shew them unto you." Yet must this illumination come through Christ, for no

man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him."

"The spirit of counsel and might." The apostle says that "the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God." Not only are they illuminated with all Christian doctrine, but they are inspired with a holy prudence such as Christ showed in his life for all their Christian conduct. As the steps, not only the way he was to walk in, but even the steps, each step he was to take, were ordered by the Lord, so do they who are united to Christ, animated by his spirit of sonship, and taught the meaning of his word, hold sweet communion with him by prayer, and receive "counsel" for all the duties required of them, whatever be their difficulties and trials. They follow Christ, nay, he walks with them, "reasoning with them out of the Scriptures of all things concerning himself," "till their hearts burn within them." Nor is it "counsel" only, but "might." The same Holy Spirit that upheld the humanity of Christ, while, walking according to the divine counsel, he bore the burden of our sins on toward his cross where he nailed them forever, is given to his people, dwelling in them as a power from on high, pervading all their faculties, and, weak as they are, making them strong through Christ's strengthening them. So says the apostle in that aforecited prayer for the Ephesians, "That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." The same power that wrought in Christ, even the Holy Ghost, works in all those who

are members of his blessed body, quickening them as he was quickened, strengthening them as he was strengthened, until, like him, they are also brought safely and triumphantly to sit with him in the heavenly places. — (See the whole connection through the second chapter of Ephesians.)

“The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Just in proportion as we know the truth, the hopes it sets before us, and the honorable duties it requires of us, will the Spirit of adoption make us, as Christ was, reverent of our Father’s will and constant presence. How shall they who are conscious of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, pollute his temple! How shall he, dwelling within them, not keep their thoughts in “a constant waiting for Christ?” “He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself so to walk even as he also walked;” and the rule of the Saviour’s life, as declared by the apostle at the Pentecost, was to “set the Lord alway before his face.”

Here, then, we see that, from their union with Christ by the grace of the Holy Ghost, believers enjoy, with the benefits of *adoption*, *illumination*, and *strength*, a divine *sanctification* begun with their new birth, carried on through all their experience here, and sure to be made perfect where Christ is now perfect in his kingdom on high. And all this is the work of the Holy Ghost through Christ and by the word of Christ; for the Holy Ghost comes to us only through Christ’s meritorious intercession; and he, though he knows all things, knows no other method of the Spirit’s operation but through the gospel. “Sanctify them,” prayed he to the Father, as he had promised his disciples that he would pray for the Comforter, — “sanctify them

through thy truth, thy word is truth." The Spirit of Christ in the heart, and the Spirit of Christ in the word, unite to make the believer of the truth perfect in Christ Jesus.

Two points remain for our handling, which shall be brief.

2. Religious comfort.

"The Holy Ghost is given me that he may comfort me," says the believer in the 53rd answer of the Catechism.

He must have been but a careless reader of Scripture, who has not seen how full it is of promises and revelations of comfort. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem;" was the language of prophecy fulfilled in the gospel. And he must have had but little experience of the Christian life, who does not feel the need of constant comfort from his Father in heaven. The preaching of Christ was almost altogether made up of comfortable words; his last sermon to his disciples at the supper was of nothing else; and his apostolic successors followed his gracious example. So an eminent title of the Holy Ghost is "The Comforter"; and, although the original term may have other meanings which we have now no time to look into, Comforter is a true, and not the least appropriate, signification.

The believer needs comfort. He is here in a state, and under a process of discipline, chastened, and often sorely, by the faithful hand of his wise Father; a chastening often compared to the passing of precious metals through the intense heat of a refiner's furnace; nay, sometimes, to crucifixion itself. His Master was a man of sorrows, and he must drink of his Master's cup, and

be baptized with his Master's baptism. Does he not need comfort ?

He has to endure "the contradiction of sinners" against Christ and himself as a follower of Christ. His good name impeached, his motives perverted, his faithfulness ridiculed and denied ; yes, his life's life sworn away by cruel, downright lies, as was Christ's. He sees the sins of men against his God, and "rivers of water run down his eyes, because men keep not God's law." He beholds Christ's cause wounded in the house of his friends by the inconsistencies of Christians, the teachings of error in doctrine and morals, until his heart bleeds with anguish. Does he not need comfort ?

But most of all he is humbled and in agony because of his own sins ; the body of sin and death about him, the world that lies in wickedness around him, and the malicious tempter ever active in assailing or seducing, or entrapping him. His heart is still at times "an evil heart of unbelief," at all times "deceitful above all things." Does he not need comfort ?

But he has it in Christ, and by the Holy Ghost through Christ, and our previous learning tells us how.

He is united to Christ by a bond close, tender, and never to be broken. Every form of trouble he is called to know, Christ passed through, except the consciousness of sin, and the Redeemer was sorely burdened with our imputed guilt. The Saviour has united him to himself. He has Christ's sympathy. O blessed thought ! Christ knows all he suffers, knows what will relieve it, knows how to turn it to his profit. He has Christ's teachings — all his faithful word, all his precious promises, all his gracious directions. The Holy Ghost brings them to him, enables him to read them, to un-

derstand them, to make them his own. He has Christ's strength to uphold him. The strong right arm is thrown around him, and in the darkest hour and through the deepest floods Christ is by his side, whispering in the feeble breathings of friend consoling his friend: "Fear not, I am with thee." "Let not thy heart be troubled." "My rod and my staff they shall comfort thee." And all this is by the power of the Holy Ghost uniting him to Christ, his living, divine glorified head.

He is adopted of the Father. By his union to Christ, he is a child of him in whose hand are all things, who withholds from him nothing that is for his good, and counts all things his, as he sees he has need. His sufferings are not punishments but chastenings, all signs of a divine love and of a preparation for glory. So he looks up beyond his troubles, and sees his Father's loving, pitying eye, and says: "It is well!" "Let him do what seemeth him good!" Blessed be his name! Only let my sufferings make me like him who suffered for me; and from my cross take me, Lord, into thy kingdom!

He has the witness of the Spirit, and it is the earnest of his inheritance; shedding by its sanctifying grace the sweet assurance of hope that there is a rest remaining for him; an inheritance where shall be no more sorrow, nor pain, nor temptation, because there shall be no more sin. This is enough to turn his sorrow into joy, his shame into glory, his prayers into thanks. "For I reckon," says he, "that the sorrows of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us."

Nor is his least comfort derived from that which our

instructor makes a *third* particular of the Holy Spirit's blessing : eternal indwelling.

“The Holy Ghost is given me that . . . he may abide with me forever.” What were he without the Holy Ghost ? without his grace keeping him united to Christ, shedding the boldness and reverence of the adoption through his heart, opening to him the sweet Scriptures, and opening his eyes to read them ; strengthening his heart with an eternal life that sends love throbbing along all his veins ; nay, sanctifying his soul with holy thoughts and desires and purposes, the sure presages, the actual foretastes of heaven itself ? What were he, if ever that Holy Spirit were taken from him ? if he were left to fall from Christ into his blindness and sin and death ?

But the Spirit will not depart. The same faithful master who promised the Comforter, and has sent him according to his promise, said : “He shall abide with you forever.” “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” As he abode in Christ, so will he abide in the Christian, until he follows Christ on and on through trial and conflict, down through the dark valley, and then into the glory.

Nor then will the Comforter depart, for heaven is full of the Holy Ghost. Shall the Father delight in his perfect children, shall the Son rejoice as he sees his own likeness in all his sanctified brotherhood, and the Holy Ghost, who made the Father's purpose and the Son's work efficient, not have his peculiar satisfaction ? No ! He shall abide with them, in them forever ; forever opening new depths in their glorified faculties, and filling them with new revelations of God's infinite riches ; forever leading them to new methods of happy

obedience, and inspiring new strength for the unprecedented privileges of service above ; forever transforming into a closer likeness to God, and changing them into the same image from glory unto glory. Even as they walk among the trees of life, the clear waters of the river of life, which are the influences of the Holy Ghost, shall flow sparkling, deep and full for their taste and their bathing in bliss ; and as they draw near to cast their crowns at their master's feet, and bask in the radiance of the Father's love, as together Father and Son sit on the throne, the Holy Ghost shall flow forth in waters of joy and holiness and peace ; and the united Three receive his homage, his praises, and his thanks !

O blessed are they who know that there is a Holy Ghost, thrice blessed they in whom he dwells ! Yea, blessed forever !

LECTURE XXV.

**THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION
OF SAINTS.**

TWENTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

QUEST. LIV. *What believest thou concerning the "Holy Catholic Church" of Christ?*

ANS. That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member thereof.

QUEST. LV. *What do you understand by "the Communion of Saints"?*

ANS. First, that all and every one who believes, being members of Christ, are, in common, partakers of him, and of all his riches and gifts; secondly, that every one must know it to be his duty readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members.

THE history of the Creed, especially before the close of the fourth century, is obscure; but we may believe that the more ancient copies ended with the article on the HOLY GHOST, as it was evidently an enlargement of the formula prescribed for baptism: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And, truly, as we have discovered from our previous studies, the true doctrine of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, comprehends all that is essential to saving faith. Subsequently, to answer the questions of inquirers, and to rebuke error, it became expedient to add the four other articles which set forth the great blessings consequent upon faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, viz: The establishment of the

church and the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.

In the most ancient copy we have of the creed of the Roman church, we find neither "the communion of saints," nor "the life everlasting"; but "the communion of saints" is, clearly, a further statement of "the church"; and "the life everlasting" of "the resurrection." In some copies, the article on the church was placed at the end, and "the communion of saints" was inserted last of all. The epithet "catholic," after "holy," before "church," was also of comparatively late date, not occurring in the oldest copy of the Roman symbol, and having been supplied to teach the unity of the true church, though divided into many particular churches, all holding the same faith. Finally, by general consent, the creed obtained its present order, which is the most proper; for "the forgiveness of" our "sins" is assured to us on our union to Christ's true body, his church; "the resurrection of the body" is the fulness of our personal adoption, and the heavenly "life" which follows our triumph over death and the grave, is "everlasting."

It is also proper to note a variation of the creed, as we have it in the Catechism before us, from the copy in our communion service. There we read: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church," etc. Here it is: "I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the holy catholic church," etc., — "I believe in" being inserted before the church. The form, as it is in the communion service, is that of the Roman Breviary (where it is styled "the Apostles' Creed"), and has been adopted, with two exceptions, by all the Protes-

tant churches, especially by the Church of England, and the Presbyterian, following the Westminster Assembly. The exceptions are the French and the Dutch Reformed churches. Both of these insert the additional "I believe," which is after the version of the Greek church; but neither of them have the word "in." They say, "I believe an holy catholic church." The preposition "in" seems to be wholly without authority, not being found in either the Dutch, German, or Latin copies; and its presence here can be accounted for only by the criminal carelessness of the American translator or editor. Nay, it is in direct contradiction to many pious commentators on the creed, who solemnly call upon us to mark the distinction between that faith which is *in* the three adorable persons of the Godhead, and that which simply recognizes the fact of the church and its covenanted blessings.* There is, perhaps, unnecessary stress laid upon this distinction, but it shows that the interpolation of our transcriber is censurable and should be removed.

Let us now learn the doctrine which we are to receive concerning the church, and this may be opened agreeably to the 54th Question and Answer under the several names by which it is described.

1. "The . . . church." 2. "The holy . . church."
3. "The holy catholic church."

1. "The church." Our word *church* is probably

* Witsius *in loc.*, says: "Had the words run: '*I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church,*' it would have been difficult to connect the words '*I believe*' with '*the holy catholic church,*' so as to suppress the particle *in*. This, however, was necessary; for a faith is exercised with regard to the church in a manner very different from that in which it is exercised with regard to God. The church is a society of creatures in whom, whether collectively or individually, it is criminal to repose the confidence of faith."

first composed and then contracted from two Greek words, signifying, The House of the Lord (Κύριον οἶκος); but the word which it translates throughout the New Testament is *ecclesia* (ἐκκλησία), which is peculiar to the later Scriptures; and the first use of it is in the Evangelist Matthew's version of our Lord's saying to Peter: "On this rock I will build my church" (xvi. 18).

The Greek term was applied by the Athenians to signify an assembly of citizens (not the fifteenth part of the population) called out of the mass for civil functions by the herald or official crier. So the gospel is said to be proclaimed as by heralds sent of God, (κηρύσσειν, to preach,) Jesus himself being the first (Matt. viii. 17). Those who are truly chosen of God hear and obey the heavenly voice, ("Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," John xviii. 37;) separating themselves from the world unto citizenship of the divine commonwealth or kingdom; and hence are denominated *elect*, or, as we take the term from the Latin, *elect*, that is, called out, selected from the rest of the world. Thus we read, (Rev. xvii. 14,) "They that are with him (the Lamb) are called (κλητοί), chosen (ἐκλεκτοί), and faithful." They were more than "called," they were elected. It is to this election of citizens that the apostle alludes, when, speaking of the Gentile believers, who, when "without Christ," were "aliens from the commonwealth (πολιτείας, citizenship) of Israel," he says: "Christ Jesus . . . came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that are nigh. . . . Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God (οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ), (Ephes.

ii. 11–19). They had now a right to enter the assembly (ἐκκλησία) or church. So our Catechism bids us say: “That the Son of God . . . gathers . . . to himself by his Spirit and his word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life.” All who are effectually called (that is, by the Spirit in their hearts, as well as by the word in their ears), and so obey the gospel as to separate themselves from the world unto God through Christ, belong to his church, which in several scriptures is, as you know, termed “his body,” — that is, a body of which he is the head.

It is evident that the bond of this citizenship, the incorporating principle uniting each to Christ, and all to each other, must be *faith*, as the Catechism has it: “A church . . . agreeing in true faith.” They are “called” by the gospel, which is a proclamation of pardon and grace through Jesus Christ; it is because they are “of the truth” that they hear and obey the divine call; and, when brought into the (ἐκκλησία) church, they are ruled and established by the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus the apostle in the aforecited chapter of Ephesians: “Ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, (that is, the truth they testified to,) Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” So, also, (1 Cor. i. 2, 3,) the apostle offers Christian salutation to “the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” All who acknowledge Christ as their Lord (which no one can truly do but by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 3), and profess his doctrine as delivered by

the apostles and prophets, belong to, and are united in, the church of Christ. Nor may we confine this church to those who have believed since the advent of Christ. The gospel had been declared, imperfectly indeed, but with increasing light ever since the fall, when the first promise, that of "the seed of the woman," was given ; it was the " Spirit " of Christ which in Noah " preached " to the antediluvian sinners " while the ark was a-preparing " (compare 1 Pet. iii. 13, 14, and 2 Pet. ii. 5). The apostle (Gal. iii. 8, 17) says expressly that the gospel was preached unto Abraham " four hundred and thirty years " before the law ; the design of both the epistle to the Galatians and that to the Hebrews is to show that the gospel was couched in all the ceremonies of the Levitical law. Jesus, our master, during his memorable walk with the two disciples to Emmaus, " beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself ; " and the writer to the Hebrews, in his eleventh chapter, combines in a common, justifying faith all who believed those revelations of eternal life by a salvation promised. Hence were they of the Old Testament united by faith in the same doctrine with those of the New, as members of the true church. So our Catechism : " The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world gathers . . to himself by his Spirit and word out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith."

You will have observed that this church is an assembly, a citizenship of believers, of whom Christ is the head, and that the bond of their union is the personal faith of each member in Christ ; so that the pretensions of the papists, and of kindred sectaries, who place the

church in the clergy or other ecclesiastical officers, are most preposterous. Were there no clergy on earth, there would not be less a true church of all who believe in Christ.

2. "The holy . . church." *Holy* has two senses not inconsistent with each other: one, that of freedom from, or of superiority to, moral evil,—as the *Holy* Ghost; the other, that of being set apart to God and his service, as were the vessels of the temple, the temple itself, and the whole nation of Israel. When a moral creature sets himself apart to the divine service, he becomes morally holy in the degree that he is consistent with the dedication. So God says to us: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." *Saint* or sanctified is synonymous with holy, being the Latin form of the word. Thus our Lord says: "For their sakes I sanctify myself (*i. e.* dedicate myself to God in my atoning work), that they also might be sanctified (*i. e.* set apart to God's service) through the truth." And the apostle speaks of those that are "*sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be *saints*." It is in this latter sense that the church of God is holy: it is sanctified or set apart, and belongs to God in Christ. The church is Christ's own; by his choice, by his purchase, by his calling, by his sealing to his service: "Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquities, and purify unto himself a peculiar people (a people *his own*), zealous of good works." The church and each member of it is set apart to the service of the divine glory in Christ, and all his gracious operations toward and in the church, and each believer, are for that supreme end. So the Catechism: "The Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and pre-

serves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith." The truth, faith in which is the bond of its union, is the means of its sanctification; whence, also, true faith is, from its very nature, fruitful of holy living; and no one, who does not sanctify himself to the service of God in Christ, has evidence that he belongs to his holy church.

Because of this election or grafting into Christ, the church is holy before God. Not that every or any member of it is pure and blameless in his own character, (for even Paul, after he had been long an apostle, confessed himself "chief of sinners,") but because the believer is washed from the guilt of his sins by the blood of Christ, and is so covered by the righteousness of Christ, his infinite surety, that God is well pleased with him for Christ's sake; as the apostle says: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; and "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Thus to sanctify the church was the purpose of Christ's atonement. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the word (*i. e.* the application of the gospel); that he might present it to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." As the individual believer is perfect in Christ Jesus from the imputation of Christ's righteousness, so is the entire church.

There is, besides, a real or actual sanctification of the church by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the seal of its union with Christ. The sinner, on be-

coming by faith a member of Christ's body, is separated from sinners not only in form but in principles of life. He has a "new heart" given to him, and a "right spirit" put within him. The Holy Spirit, having thus begun his moral transformation, carries it on surely, though gradually, to perfection, enlightening his mind with the truth, sweetly constraining him by the love of God to obey the truth, strengthening him against temptation, and comforting him under all afflictions through the truth; so that, at the great coming of the Lord Jesus, he is sanctified "wholly, body, soul, and spirit." What is true of the individual members is true of the whole church. "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." — Ephes. v. 25–27.

The church, thus chosen and called of God in Christ, sanctified and upheld by God in Christ, is forever safe with God in Christ, ordained unto everlasting life. So the Catechism: "The Son of God . . . gathers, defends, and preserves unto himself . . . a church, chosen to everlasting life."

3. "The holy catholic church." *Catholic* is not a scriptural word, though, after a time, much used by ecclesiastical writers. It is compounded of two Greek words, signifying *through all*; and, among the few classics who employ it, has the exact sense of *universal*. After the Pentecost, we find all the "called of God" then living, assembled at Jerusalem. This company of believers, baptized and communicating in the break-

ing of bread, was then the Christian church. But, as the gospel spread itself, and believers became not only very numerous but widely separated, it was necessary for Christians to organize themselves in smaller companies; whence, it is easy to see, the name of churches was given to such families of the faith: as the church at or of Antioch, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica. These several churches, subject to one divine head, and to the apostles appointed by him, holding the same faith, and observing the same sacraments, and maintaining the same discipline, were otherwise independent, so far as authority was concerned, of each other, except as they were brought under the direction of a "presbytery" or combination of elders, distinct traces of which are discoverable in the apostolical writings. Where there was need of more general consultation respecting some mooted point, a council was called; but the purpose of such council was specific, and its organization temporary.

However convenient, or, if you will, necessary, for greater usefulness such combinations as general synods, or general assemblies, or dioceses may be, they are merely conventional arrangements, such as the word of God leaves Christians to form as most expedient in the various exigencies that arise. The New Testament recognizes nothing but a church and a presbytery. There was, however, a vital bond uniting all true Christians and all minor churches, viz: "*faith in the common doctrine of Christ and the apostles.*" The church was not divided, but remained one body of Christ, though of many members. Hence the gradual adoption of a common symbol, or creed, or belief, by the mutual acknowledgment of which professing Chris-

tians might recognize each other throughout the world, however separated under their particular organizations. This creed set forth the main and essential doctrine of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as declared to the church for salvation, but touched no matters about which Christians might, without fatal error, hold various opinions. The devil, however, soon was busy in distracting the church, and, under pretence of superior purity, excited harsh and pragmatistical spirits to withhold Christian communion from those who, though holding the great articles of the faith, differed from them in less important particulars. This was especially the case with the Donatists, a body of Christians in Africa, who, it is said (though too much credence should not be allowed to historians of the period), conceiving themselves to be wronged in some matter of church government, withdrew themselves from fellowship with their opponents. This schism occurred in the earlier part of the fourth century, and it is thought that about the same time the word "catholic" was inserted after "holy" and before "church." The object of the interpolation was not, therefore, to set up exclusive claims for any particular sect or body of Christians, however numerous or powerful, but, on the contrary, as the word itself shows, to repudiate and oppose such bigotry by acknowledging all who receive the doctrine set forth in the Creed after the word of God as true members of the one church of Christ. The very corrupt, if not utterly spurious, Church of Rome, grasping after dominion over all Christendom, has usurped this epithet of "catholic," and denounces all who deny her impious pretensions as in damnable schism from the body of Christ. On this, Secker, Archbishop of Can-

terbury, admirably observes : “It is no more than as if one diseased limb, perhaps the larger for being diseased, can be the whole body of a man ; and by attempting to exclude us, they take the direct way to exclude themselves ; unless God impute their uncharitable way of thinking and acting, as we hope he will, to excusable ignorance and mistake. The Church of England pretends not to be the whole catholic church, but is undoubtedly a sound member of it ; so that we have much better ground to call ourselves catholics than they, were such names worth disputing about, which they are not.” I quote these words of that eminent dignitary of the Episcopal church, to show that the exclusive pretensions, which have been and are daily so arrogantly flaunted in our faces by other members of his sect, make no part of their own church doctrines, but are as widely different from the Christian sentiments of not a few of its most distinguished doctors, as they are from true charity and religious decency. The true catholic acknowledges all who acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be, by the appointment of the Father, and the grace of the divine Spirit, their only Lord and Saviour. They who make the church more narrow than this, practically disown this article of the Creed. They have no right to repeat it ; but utter an untruth when they do so. Nay, they exclude themselves from the catholic church and from the communion of saints, as a branch, torn from the main stem, becomes not the tree, but only is separated from the life by which all the branches live.

Beware, therefore, I charge you, before God and his Christ who is Lord of all, how you allow your sectarian pride to go so far as to disown any of Christ’s true

flock. The Scriptures, as we have seen, plainly teach that all who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, believe in Jesus Christ for the saving of their souls, and prove the sincerity of their faith by Christian practice, are members of his living body. They are as free from insisting upon entire conformity of doctrine and practice to be essential, but on the contrary enjoin the utmost charity and forbearance. The apostle Paul has a passage directly in point when (Rom. xiv. 1-18), speaking of some sharp contentions about matters quite as serious as some that divide Christians nowadays, he says : " Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things ; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth ; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand. . . But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men." Therefore, (let me quote again from Archbishop Secker,) " Christ's church is the whole number of those who believe on him. How much soever they may differ in some opinions or practices, yet are they one in all things essential. How wide soever they may be dispersed throughout the world, they shall at last be gathered unto him. We can only judge according to appearances, and, there-

fore, to us, all must be members of Christ's church who make a visible profession of being Christians. But God sees every secret thought, and, in his eye, they alone belong truly to his church who serve him "in the hidden man of the heart, "that inward sincerity to human eye invisible."

Happy, unspeakably happy, is he who can adopt with humble confidence the words of our Catechism, and say, "I believe that I am, and forever shall remain, a living member of" Christ's "holy, catholic church!"

You will have observed that throughout this discussion we have considered the church in its spiritual character, not as to the external or visible form of it; because such is the doctrine of the article. But it must not be overlooked, that God has required every believer in Christ's name to confess him before men, and all Christians to separate themselves from the world, and, hence, to constitute a visible body or kingdom of his servants for the publication of his truth, the celebration of his worship, and the performance of his commands. And as visible signs or rites are necessary for the outward manifestation of this church, he has appointed two sacraments: one, initiatory baptism, by which we are to declare ourselves, and be received as members of the church; the other, confirmatory, the Lord's Supper, by which we are strengthened in the doctrines we profess, and which that sacrament sets forth. None, therefore, who do not unite themselves to the visible church have a right to be considered members of the church spiritual. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the divinely appointed methods of making such open profession; and, therefore, none

who refuse to receive those sacraments act in conformity to Christ's requirements, or can be acknowledged as faithful Christians ; though this must not be carried so far as to exclude those who have no opportunity of compliance, or even those who through ignorance (as the Society of Friends) consider the inner baptism of the Spirit and edification through the truth, which the sacraments represent, to be all that is necessary. This last is a very grave error, but we would fain hope not sufficient to obviate the christianizing power of faith in Christ Jesus.

These sacraments are, however, not in themselves of saving efficacy, and are of no value ; nay, they become gross insults to God, except as they are the outward signs of inward grace.

The Lord Jesus, also, for wise purposes, ordained that certain men should be set apart for the public service of the church, in the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the maintenance of discipline, the disposition of charity, and the government of the Lord's house.

These offices are necessary for a church after the apostolic order ; but Christians have differed as to the mode and details of the ecclesiastical system most accordant with the word of God ; and especially three kinds of government have had their strenuous advocates, viz : The democratical or Congregationalist, the monarchical or the Episcopalian, and the republican-representative, or the Presbyterian. This last, our church, in common with the larger portion of the reformed churches, holds to be the most scriptural ; but, while we believe that Presbyterianism is necessary to the *perfection* of a church, we should not think it

of the Holy Ghost in the fulness of Christ, the love we feel for Christ our head should flow forth to all our fellow-members of his holy body ; and his love to us make them dear to us for his sake. And this love should be cultivated, not waiting until it is drawn out of us by accidental circumstances. We should delight to meditate on the many members of Christ's elect body with whom we are joined, though they are scattered throughout the world. Our hearts should make voyages and journeys of discovery after them ; and, remembering that they may be in affliction, and must be in temptation, we should pray for them and delight to hold them in the embraces of our faith. Is it not a most pleasant thought, that, from whatever spot on earth a Christian prays, his prayers go up to the one heart of Christ, and there meet with our prayers and the prayers of all other Christians ; and so when blessings for each of us are sent, they all flow out from the same fountain of infinite love ! How does this make us all one in communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of grace and supplication which is given to us all, as the sign of our adoption !

3. With this love there will be sympathy. "As in water, face answereth to face, so answereth the heart of man to man." This is even more true of Christians. Our history is the same, saved from the same ruin by the same grace. Our difficulties are the same from the deceiving heart within, and from the temptations without ; our duties are the same, the advancement of God's glory in the services of a Christian life ; our comforts are the same, the covenant promises of the Father, the kinsmanship of the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ; our hope is the same, of eternal bliss in our

father's house when the family shall all be brought home, — "no wanderer lost," — to dwell in love and joy and peace forever. The sympathy of Christ the head thrills through each and all the members of his blessed body, and so each member should sympathize with all the rest. This is the beginning of the communion of the church above: here, like our salvation, begun in sorrow; there, like our salvation, consummated in a happiness without alloy.

4. Such sympathy were nought, if it be not manifested by mutual assistance. Every one must know it to be his duty readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts for the advantage and salvation of other members. The church is an organized body, so that we cannot fail to be affected by the healthfulness or sickness of any member. Nay, as in the individual believer the grace of God operates through his own use of his own faculties, so in the church the grace we have in common operates through the zeal of its members. This cannot be made clearer than by remembering the apostle's words (Ephes. iv. 13,) when, speaking of the edifying or building up of Christ's body in the perfecting of the saints, he says we must "grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every saint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love." Here you see that, while Christ is the edifier of the body, it is to edify itself; and, while there is "the effectual working" of the Holy Ghost "in the measure of every part" (*i. e.* the degree of grace and ability given to each member), the body is "compacted," and

LECTURE XXVI.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

TWENTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

QUEST. LVI. *What believest thou concerning "the forgiveness of sins" ?*

ANS. That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins and my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long; but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God.

AFTER the doctrine of "the holy Catholic church" properly comes a consideration of those benefits which every true member of Christ's body receives through faith in his name. These are concisely stated as three: The forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. The first we enjoy even in this life, the other two after death. Our present lesson respects

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; and we could not have a better guide for our thoughts than the clear and precise answer to the 56th Question which we have just read.

Let us examine it under four heads:

FIRST: *The nature of forgiveness.*

SECONDLY: *The author of forgiveness.*

THIRDLY: *The means of forgiveness.*

FOURTHLY: *The extent of forgiveness.*

On these several points we accept and profess the opinions of our church, not on its authority, but because they agree strictly with the Word of God out of

which they are taken. We bring no preconceived philosophy to the interpretation of the Scripture, but shall take the statements of Scripture, which is our only rule of faith, precisely as they are made, since from the very nature of the case we can know nothing of forgiveness except from the revelation of him, who, because he alone is our judge, can alone be our Saviour. Nor shall we attempt to vindicate the divine gospel of forgiveness against those who would teach in its stead a scheme of their own devising, since they contend with the words of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST: *The nature of the forgiveness of sins.*

What is sin? *Iniquity* (or inequality) is wrongdoing toward another. *Transgression* is a breaking of the precise bounds or rules fixed for our conduct by competent authority. *Unrighteousness* is non-conformity to right. Sin * (a purely English word, the others are from the Latin) includes all these, but has in addition a special sense of being committed against God; for though we may speak of iniquity or transgression or unrighteousness in our relations to men, we cannot without violence use the word sin, except as committed against God. In our English version, *sin* translates one word (*ἁμαρτία*), except in three places (Ephes. i. 7; ii. 5; Col. ii. 13), where another word (*παράπτωμα*) is found, which elsewhere is translated either *trespass* or *offence*. In one text we find both words (Ephes. ii. 1) "dead in trespasses and sins." But in every text where the former word, always rendered *sin*, occurs, it has the sense of offence to God; † so that our word

* Sin. German, *Sünde* (from *Sunder*, departure).

† The verb *ἁμαρτάνω*, in Matt. xviii. 15, 21; Luke xvii. 3, 4, is used with reference to man; but *ἁμαρτήμα*, *ἁμαρτία*, never.

sin corresponds exactly to it. Hence the excellently precise definition of the Westminster divines :

“Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God.” It is the doing of what God has forbidden, or the not doing what God has commanded. So in the general confession of the Episcopal Church they say : “We have offended against thy holy laws : we have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.”

The moral nature of man, however, is such, that his acts, inward or overt, are not instinctive or isolated, but proceed from certain moral tendencies within him, which, from lack of a more precise term, we call principles. Thus an honest man abstains from dishonest acts, because he has a principle or fixed determination to honesty within him ; a dishonest man acts dishonestly from want of such a principle ; and it is from the evidence he gives of having or lacking such principles that we form our judgment of his character. So one who has a reverent love for God in his heart will desire and endeavor to conform himself to all God’s will, because he is governed by a principle of godliness. The absence of such a principle (which the Scripture calls the image of God, or likeness to God, because it is a correspondence of the creature to the Creator) renders our whole nature sinful, because it is wholly inclined to sin against God. Hence the Scriptures declare that we are sinners by nature : “By nature children of wrath ;” because naturally, as we are born, and before we are renewed by grace, we have no such principle of godliness, for which we are most justly condemned, since an evil disposition is more criminal

than single evil acts. This is admitted in the discipline of a wise parent, who does not so much punish his child for a separate fault, as endeavor to correct the child's evil tendencies or disposition, by the inculcation of opposite principles. This corrupt tendency, which the Scriptures assert belong to all mankind, is the root of all sin in us ; and as the holy principle was lost by our first parent Adam, by the commission of his first sin, and so is wanting in all his descendants, our natural depravity, our tendency to sin, is called by theologians *original sin*, a term not found in Scripture but justified by Scripture: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." It is original sin in a double sense : because it came from the first sin of the first man, and because it is the source (*fons et origo*) of all our sins. When, therefore, we speak of "the forgiveness of sins," we suppose the forgiveness to extend not only to our actual sins of omission and commission, but also to our original sin, the corruption of our whole nature. Thus, the Catechism bids us say that we believe "God will no more remember our sins and our corrupt nature."

"Forgiveness" is an English word, compounded of *give* and the prefix *for*, which has the sense of *from*, implying separation,* as in for-sake, for-get, for-bear. In our English version it translates two words: one meaning a loosing from (*ἀπολύω*, Luke vi. 27), the other a taking away (*ἄφεςις*, from *ἀφίημι*, in very many places). So that our translators are nicely accurate in this term also. Our Catechism makes us say that

* Sometimes *for* is contracted from *fore*, — *forwards*; sometimes intensity from German *ver*, — *forlorn*.

“God will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature”; which language is justified by the prophet Jeremiah, xxxi. 34: “Saith the Lord, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Not that God, strictly speaking, ever forgets, but he acts towards those whom he forgives as though their sins were forgotten. He separates their sins from them.

The fact of the sin having been committed is not destroyed. That is impossible. Nothing can change or destroy the past. It must ever remain true that sin was committed. It is true of all the saints in glory that they were once sinners by nature and practice, and it must ever remain known to God’s all-present mind that we have sinned against him.

The wickedness of the sin is not taken away. Nothing can reconcile wrong and right. What is wrong once must be wrong always, for right is unchangeable as God himself.

Nor can the demerit or punishment due to sin be taken away. It is the rule of eternal order, the demand of eternal justice, that punishment should follow violation of law. This axiom lies deeper than in the nature of things; it is in the nature of the infinitely perfect God. So Seneca truly says, that in a perfect government crime can never be forgiven, because forgiveness is inconsistent with justice. The sin must be expiated before the sinner can go free. The punishment due to his sin must be in some manner carried to execution before he can be treated as though he had never sinned.

But “forgiveness” does mean that the sinner is set free from his personal obnoxiousness to punishment (or

guilt), or that the just consequence of his sins is taken away from him because that consequence, or guilt, or punishment, has been borne and satisfied in some way consistent with divine justice, though not by him. This method, as we shall hereafter learn more particularly, is, by the substitution of Christ, to satisfy the law, in the place of the sinner who believes on his name. In other words, his sin is punished and the law takes its course, but in Christ and on Christ's person, not in and on the penitent believer. Thus we say after the Catechism, not that God forgives us without reason, or arbitrarily, (for that were a violation of justice and truth,) but "that God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature," "but will graciously impute to me the righteousness of Christ, that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God." The forgiveness is every way consistent with justice, because it is on account of satisfaction rendered and righteousness imputed. This will be farther treated of under our third head.

SECONDLY: *The author of forgiveness.*

It is God only. "I, even I, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." Is. xliii. 25.

It can be God only, for it is against him that the sin has been committed. All wrong is wrong against God, for all our duty is to him. We may wrong our fellow-creatures, and they may forgive us; but their forgiveness does not free us from the guilt of having sinned against God in wronging them. Thus David, after his worst and very complicated crimes, in which he had most foully wronged and murdered one whom as his subject he was bound to protect and honor, exclaims to

God: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." So Joseph, faithful in the midst of temptation, asks: "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Hence God has enjoined upon us forgiveness to those who have injured us, because punishment, and therefore remittal of punishment, is his alone. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." "Who," then, "can forgive sins, but God only?"

As forgiveness can be extended only for the sake of satisfaction rendered, God only can forgive, for he only can determine the sufficiency of the satisfaction, or whether, if it be sufficient, it shall be accepted. It is a matter of free grace on his part, if he release the sinner from punishment for any reason.

So, also, he alone can forgive, because he alone could devise and execute a plan by which his mercy to the sinner may be justified. Such, in his estimation, is the enormity of sin,—such its extreme guiltiness,—that he has declared its desert to be eternal punishment; and he never remits sin except for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, his coequal Son in our nature. No such atonement could ever have been provided except by him alone. Therefore, as God in his mercy and wisdom and power has provided the only method by which sin can be forgiven, he only is the author of forgiveness; and the mercy of the forgiveness lies in the provision and application to the sinner of the justifying righteousness. It is mercy, but mercy through justice; the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Thus we come to,

THIRDLY: *The means of forgiveness.*

This the Catechism declares to be "Christ's satis-

faction," — "the imputation of the righteousness of Christ."

We have already seen that no sin of ours can go unpunished, and that the guiltiness of sin is so great that we can never satisfy the penalty ourselves, but that, if not forgiven, we must suffer on eternally. It follows, therefore, that the sinner cannot be pardoned except the divine justice accept a sufficient righteousness presented by another on his behalf. If he may not satisfy the law of God by a substitute, he must die. The Scripture is explicit and decisive on this point. God will by no means clear the guilty. If we continue guilty we must die; and except that guilt can be taken off from us by another, our guilt is perpetual.

But will God accept such a vicarious satisfaction? If so, has such a satisfaction been provided? If so, how may we avail ourselves of its advantage?

Will God accept such a satisfaction? Will the substitution of a vicarious righteousness justify his forgiveness of the actual sinner? The best answer to these questions is, that he has done so. He, the original of all law and justice, has declared that, for the sake of Christ's righteousness, he is justified in pardoning all who will accept of mercy through Christ; and this was the purpose for which he sent Christ into the world to obey, to suffer, and to die. Thus the apostle (Rom. iii. 19–26): "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" *i. e.* salvation by our own works is impossible. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness which is of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference; for all

have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God ; to declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." This plainly teaches us, that God has provided a redemption in the work of Christ, as the justification of the believing sinner, and that he does pardon every sinner who believes, for the sake of what Christ has accomplished. That which God has done and promises to do must be right.

But we may state reasons for this acceptance of a substituted righteousness : God had already dealt with us because of our representation by another. However our involvement with Adam, the head of our race and the first sinner, may be stated by different interpreters of the scriptural declarations on the subject, it cannot be denied that we do suffer in consequence of Adam's fall. The ground cursed for his sake is still cursed to us ; still the price of man's bread is the sweat of his face ; nor is there one of all the human family, the circumstances of whose birth, the mortality of whose frame, the sorrows of whose life, do not prove that death has come upon him by an unbroken entail from his first parents. If we suffer for the sins of another, may we not be saved by another's righteousness ? The principle of representation or substitution is traceable through all the interlinking relations of man with man. It is a law of our nature. Besides, as was observed in a former lecture, what is the end of punishment ? Certainly not the destruction of the transgressor, but the

vindication of the law, that its majesty may be maintained and others be deterred from following his example. If, then, the law of God may be so magnified and its truth be vindicated by the substitution of another to bear the penalty, the substitute may be accepted and the sinner set free. How completely has this been done by the vicarious work and passion of Christ? How clearly do they show God's estimate of sin and of righteousness? The sufferings of Christ had in them more proof of divine wrath against sin, more expiatory virtue, more honor to the law, more warning of God's certain condemnation of the impenitent, than the aggregate sufferings of the whole human family. The merit of Christ's active obedience was greater than the aggregate obedience of a thousand races like ours. The law of God, therefore, receives far greater majesty by the pardon of the sinner through the righteousness of Christ. God remains infinitely just, yet becomes infinitely merciful towards the sinner represented by Christ.

Such a satisfaction has been made. Behold the wisdom and the grace of God! His own coequal Son, who being no creature is no servant, makes the satisfaction. The sinner is man: the law broken was the law given to be obeyed by man on earth; the penalty was the death of man; and so the only begotten of God assumes to his infinite divinity the nature of man, — puts himself under the law given to us, obeys it in his life upon earth, suffers our penalty in his death on the cross, making the merit of his obedience and suffering in our nature infinite by his divinity, as the altar sanctifying the sacrifice. This is not a theory of a theological school. It is the truth, wellnigh the language of Scripture: "When the fulness of time

was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He took our place that we might be admitted to his. "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The work was accomplished; for, says the apostle: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

What is the method by which this satisfaction advantages us?

The answer of our instructor is: By *Imputation*; which is synonymous with the phrase in the former part of the paragraph: "for the sake of Christ's satisfaction." For what is the meaning of imputation? Not that by the imputation of sins to Christ he becomes a sinner, or our sins become his sins; or that by the imputation of his righteous acts to the sinner he becomes actually innocent, or Christ's acts his acts. In no sense are, or can be, personal acts transferable. But the legal consequences of the acts are transferred by imputation: Christ suffered for our sins; we are saved and accepted on account of his righteousness. Whenever, therefore, the sinner believes in Christ,—that is, accepts and relies upon Christ's suretyship,—he is justified before God, because Christ's righteousness is imputed to him. So says the Psalmist: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity;" which is equivalent to the former part of the parallelism: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. And again, "Abraham believed God and it was accounted (*i. e.* imputed) unto him for righteousness."

FOURTHLY : *The extent of this forgiveness.*

Here the Catechism bids us say, that "God will no more remember my sins nor my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long . . . that I may never be condemned before the tribunal of God."

It is the forgiveness of all the believer's sins. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." There is no exception or reserve made, and, therefore, all the sins of the Christian are blotted out. Not only the sins which he has committed, but all the sins which his "corrupt nature," notwithstanding his struggles against it, may cause him to commit. This is necessary to salvation. For the sanctification of the sinner, though begun at the moment he believes, is not complete until his admission to glory. If, therefore, the pardon extends only to sins committed before conversion, or, as some have heretically contended, before baptism, the penitent will certainly, because of his remaining weakness, fall into fresh condemnation from which there is no salvation. But, blessed be his name! God pardons our whole sinful nature, and therefore all the sins which, despite of our faith, yet imperfect, come from it; so that he who truly believes can never in any sense "be condemned before the tribunal of God." His acquittal is complete, his justification is established, his salvation is sure; that acquittal is not because of his own work, nor can be defeated by his sins, but is for the sake of the perfect and all-sufficient righteousness of Christ.

Nor let any say that this doctrine leads to licentiousness in giving immunity to the sinner. Mark the careful language of the Catechism: we must "struggle

all our lives long" against this "corrupt nature." It is an essential quality of true faith, saving faith, that it "works by love," "purifies the heart," and "overcomes the world." If, therefore, we do not struggle against our "corrupt nature," we have no faith, and are not covered by Christ's merits. If we wilfully and obstinately sin on, we have no evidence of pardon, but of the reverse. None ever accepted Christ as a Saviour from punishment, who did not accept him as a Saviour from the power of sin. Nay, the seal of the believer's acceptance with God is the stamp of Christ's likeness on his heart by the Holy Spirit, and the sanctifying grace of the Spirit is the only sure earnest of perfect salvation amidst the holiness of heaven. It is by this Spirit within him by which he struggles against his "corrupt nature."

God does, indeed, chasten the believer, but chastisement is not punishment; on the contrary, it is a proof of the Father's adopting love. So, if "we are, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, sorry for (our sinful) weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God, he may rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will in us, can hinder us from being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of the heavenly meat and drink." For thus says the apostle: "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Such, brethren, is the scriptural doctrine of forgiveness. God grant us the experience of it in our own souls.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

TWENTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

QUEST. LVII. *What comfort doth the resurrection of the body afford thee?*

ANS. That not only my soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head; but also that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like to the glorious body of Christ.

QUEST. LVIII. *What comfort takest thou from the article of "life everlasting"?*

ANS. That, since I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy, after this life I shall inherit perfect salvation, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, and that to praise God therein forever.

EVERY careful reader of Scripture must be struck with the prominence given to the doctrine of the resurrection in the New Testament. Our blessed Lord taught it plainly in several emphatic passages, as when he said: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day;" and when he comforted Martha at the grave of her brother: "Thy brother shall rise again. . . . I am the resurrection and the life;" and, more particularly, when he told the cavilling Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they

that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." All the apostles treat of it as not merely a pleasing expectation, but a radical truth of Christianity. They taught it to the multitudes of the Pentecost ; for we find that the Sadducees were especially grieved because they "preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." So Paul was mocked at by the Athenians, because "he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection" ; and, in defending himself before Felix, he professed that he believed "all things which are written in the law and in the prophets, and had hope towards God (which the Jews also allowed) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." He lays a like stress upon it in his epistles ; as in Romans, where he speaks of "waiting for the adoption, even the redemption, of the body" ; and in that noble chapter, the xvth of 1st Corinthians, where, having demonstrated and expounded it at great length, he adds, as the proper practical inference : "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as your labor is not in vain in the Lord." So the other apostles united in carrying the faith of the churches forward to the grand consummation of the evangelical system, "the restitution of all things," when the bodies of Christ's saints would be fashioned "like unto his glorious body." Indeed, such courage and comfort had the early believers from this article of our creed, that they exulted amidst the tortures of martyrdom ; and their persecutors, on one occasion, burnt even the bones of those that had been slain for Christ, and scattered their ashes on the waters of a rapid stream,* in vain

* The Rhone. Eusebius, l. 1. c. 1.

attempt to take away the sublime hope from the surviving confessors.

Most gladly, therefore, should we avail ourselves of the opportunity and help afforded us by the lesson of to-day, in harmony with Scripture, to study this cardinal doctrine as fully as our time will permit.

Let us remember, however, first, that the resurrection of the body is purely a doctrine of divine Scripture. There is no trace of its ever having been held by any man who had not the aid of revelation. Many of the ancients, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, had hopes, by no means clear or well assured, of the soul's immortality, but the resurrection of the body was not dreamed of by any philosophical sect; and when proclaimed by "the gospel," which "brought life and immortality to light," it was received with ridicule on every side. We have seen that the Athenians mocked at it, and thought that "Jesus and the resurrection," which Paul preached on Mars Hill, were two "strange" or new "gods." Pliny, the celebrated naturalist, and foremost among the Latin writers on science, who flourished about the time that Paul preached at Rome, and probably was not wholly ignorant of this Christian belief, holds language most extraordinary: "The chief comfort man hath for his imperfections in nature is this, that even God is not omnipotent; and some things are beyond his reach. For neither is he able to work his own death, were he never so desirous of it, as man can do when he is tired of life (the best gift bestowed on him amidst so many miseries); neither can he endow man with immortality (everlasting life), nor yet recall, raise, and revive those that are once departed and dead."* Celsus, the bitter reviler of Christianity,

* Nat. Hist. b. 1, c. vii.

laughs at it as "a hope of worms, a filthy and disgusting thing, which God neither can nor will bring to pass." Julian, notorious as the Apostate, an elegant writer, and of no mean rank as a philosopher, in his frequent attacks upon Christianity, shows more spleen against this doctrine than any other. Justin Martyr sums up his argument on the resurrection (a fragment of which has reached us) in words like these: "We see that our blessed Saviour throughout all the gospel declares the salvation of our flesh. Why, then, do we hearken to the pernicious maxims of infidels, who impudently swerve from the truth by owning that the soul only is immortal and incorruptible, but the body corruptible and perishable. This we learned from Plato and Pythagoras before we knew the truth. If our Saviour has taught us no more than this, he has taught us nothing more than those philosophers. But he has made a new and wonderful revelation to mankind; for, truly, new and wonderful it is for God to promise, not only to preserve that which is incorruptible in incorruption, but to bestow also incorruption on that which is corruptible." It is, therefore, to the word of God alone that we must go for our "lively hope," humbly employing our reason to follow and acknowledge the wisdom from on high; for, though it was beyond the power of reason to discover the resurrection, it is fully within the province of that faculty to perceive and comprehend the truth of it.

Let us take for our discussion the very natural order suggested by the answer to the 57th Question.

It speaks of what occurs "after this life"; that is, after what is commonly called death, when the soul is separated from the body. Now we ask,

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul?*

SECONDLY: *What becomes of the body?*

THIRDLY: *What will be the final state of both body and soul?*

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul "after this life"?*

1. It does not *perish*. It must continue to exist, because after death is the judgment; and exist forever, because from the judgment "the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." The words *everlasting* and *eternal* mean precisely the same, and translate one Greek word, so that if the righteous will be rewarded eternally, the wicked will be punished eternally; the souls of both, the wicked and the righteous, are imperishable; for, though the term "life" is put for the blessedness of the righteous, it does not follow that the punishment of the wicked is annihilation (which, indeed, would be the negation of punishment), since many Scriptures show, especially the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that the wicked are conscious sufferers in a place of torment. Indeed, the whole Scripture declares this life to be a preparation for eternity, the seed-time of an everlasting harvest, the results corresponding to our actions here.

2. The soul does not *sleep* until the resurrection, as some fanciful heretics have contended, for the parable just cited shows the contrary. Many Scriptures speak of the departed believer as in bliss: the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews places "the spirits of just men made perfect" among the "innumerable" angels in "the heavenly Jerusalem"; and Paul counted it better "to depart and be with Christ," — which he would not have thought if he knew that he was to be dormant on his leaving the scene of his great usefulness, as in

such case he would have preferred to remain. It is the body of the Christian that sleeps in Jesus, not the ever active, sensible soul.

3. Neither does the soul pass into another *preparatory* state, such as that the papists call *purgatory*. For, as to any purgatorial purification by fire, the notion is flatly contradicted by the apostolical doctrine that “the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin,” and that after Christ’s passion “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” Nay, if such purification by fire be necessary, why do they pray and offer masses for the souls of the dead? We would not have them enter heaven unpurified, and neither prayers nor masses can take the place of fire.

4. Nor does *the soul go into any other state* (sometimes called “intermediate”) than heaven or hell, where it remains until the resurrection. For, in the first place, (as was shown in the lecture on Christ’s “Descent into Hell,”)* the Scripture does not speak of such a place.

Nor is such a place necessary. Heaven is the abode of blessed spirits, and hell of lost spirits; and there is no unfitness in a disincorporated soul for such an abode. Besides, what is a spirit? Does a spirit occupy space? Is heaven or hell an extent of space? These are questions not readily answered, on which the most ingenious minds have pondered without satisfaction. But we know that heaven is a *state* of happiness, hell a *state* of misery. Is the happiness of the justified soul, which lies in the enjoyment of God, so different from that of the holy angels, that they cannot enjoy heaven together? May not a miserable soul be miserable in hell? Christ has gone to heaven, and, therefore, when

* Which see, Vol. I. p. 395.

a Christian departs to be with Christ, he must go at once to heaven ; while the wicked depart, accursed, “into the * everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Hence the Catechism makes the believer confidently say, “My soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its head.”

SECONDLY : *What will become of the body after death ?*

The Catechism bids each of us answer : “This, my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.”

Here we should note an unfortunate error in our translation of the Catechism, which is also found in the common English version of the creed. In all other versions of the creed, whatever be the language, it is “the resurrection of the *flesh*,” not “of the *body*.” The variation is to be lamented, as it defeats one design of the article, which was to assert the resurrection of our self-same bodies, in opposition to such heretics as, following Origen, contended that at the resurrection we shall receive phantasms or unsubstantial semblances of our present bodies, or forms in some way not the same. Our Catechism, in its original German, and also in the Dutch translation, preserves the word *flesh* ; † and, in the answer before us, it is, “This my *flesh*” ; so the error is inexcusable.

I. The body after death is dissolved according to the original sentence : “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” This we know by too painful experience. What process the bodies of the wicked will go

* The article is definite.

† *Mijn vleesch*. Ger., *mein fleisch*.

through while in dissolution, we are not told, though, doubtless, it will be a preparation for their endurance of punishment ; but we have good reason to believe, that, during their long sleep in the grave, the bodies of the righteous will be purified from the corrupt accidents of their present mortality, and prepared for the “ exceeding weight of glory ” which shall come upon them at the resurrection.

II. For the body will be raised again at the last day.

The Catechism confines its answer to the resurrection of the believer, but as the article itself contemplates the resurrection in general, we shall make that our subject.

1. As to the *fact* of the resurrection, the believer of Scripture can have no doubt. We have already seen how prominent a doctrine of the New Testament it is, and we trace it from the beginning of the Old, the light increasing until the coming of him who is “ the Life.” The antediluvian world saw the bodies of men crumble into dust, but the translation of Enoch, body and soul, to God, proved that the whole nature of man was destined for immortality. Job, whose history is the most ancient of the sacred books, knew that his “ Redeemer lived, . . . and that, though after his skin worms destroy his body, in his ‘ flesh ’ he should see God.” The miracle of Enoch was repeated for the Jews under the law, by the translation of Elijah ; besides which, there were several instances of actual resuscitation from death, as of the Shunamite’s child, the child of the widow of Sarepta, the dead man whose corpse touched the bones of Elisha, — and, perhaps, others. (See Hebrews xi. 35.) David avows the same glorious hope, when he says : “ My flesh also shall rest in hope ; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; ” and again :

“I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” Isaiah prophesies of the uprising of the saints through the victory of Christ over the grave: “Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dead is as the dead of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” Daniel is very explicit: “Many (*i. e.* the multitude) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” But the great proof is the resurrection of our Lord himself, as “the first-fruits of them that sleep”; whence he called himself “the resurrection and the life.” The whole gospel turns on that cardinal fact as opening the kingdom of heaven; so the apostle says: “If there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen; but if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

2. The *reason* for the resurrection.

Omitting several minor arguments which have not a little force, we go at once to the main reason: The justice of God in distributing rewards and punishments. When God was proceeding to the creation of man, he said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;” and so he “formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” or person. What the “image of God” was, it is not necessary now to determine; but we must believe that the man thus created consisted both of body and soul. His rational soul was not *all* of his humanity, but his *flesh* also was *essential* to it. Nay, his spirit, unlike that of an angel, was specially fitted to inhabit a body, and act through it and with it. Not

that it cannot live and act when separate from the body, but that a union with the body is necessary to the completeness of its vigor and action. In a word, the man is not entire without body as well as soul. This is proved by the fact, that, when it pleased our adorable Lord to become man, or assume to his divinity our humanity, he took to himself not only a reasonable soul, but also a true body, "flesh and blood" like ours. All the dealings of God in the government of man had reference, therefore, to *man thus compounded of body and soul*. The rewards of life and the penalties of disobedience were proposed to man thus constituted, and not to him as a spirit only. It is true, that, as the body, when separate from the spirit, is not conscious or reasonable, it cannot be the subject of moral dealing except as it is connected with the soul. But it does not follow that God may not reach the soul with blessing or misery through the body, as, indeed, we know from our daily experience. For there are not a few exquisite pleasures, as well as pains, derived by the soul through our corporeal senses, and appetites, and faculties, and sensations. So also there are important duties, as well as gross crimes, which the soul cannot act out except through the body. It is, therefore, obviously fitting that man's punishment or reward should be visited on both his soul and body. Not that the soul cannot suffer or enjoy without the body, but it cannot so much as when in the body. The man, that is the whole man, — man as he was created, man as he lives and acts in his present sphere, — must be the subject of God's full judicial dealing.

The facts of the case show this. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was the threaten-

ing of penalty, implying the opposite reward of opposite obedience. Man sinned, and instantly the favor of God, which is life, was taken from the soul, and the body through its lusts and pains became at once its tempter and its tormentor. The death which, unless averted by the grace of Christ, is eternal, passed upon both body and soul. So, also, we find that when Christ undertook to expiate our guilt, by bearing our punishment, he suffered both in body and soul; for, being the substitute of man, he suffered as man; and, also, when his satisfaction was complete, he was rewarded with glory in heaven, ascending body and soul to the right hand of the Father. It follows inevitably, that those covered by his suretyship were redeemed both body and soul; not only their souls made heirs of heavenly blessedness, but their bodies also destined to be made like his own; while, on the other hand, death must have its eternal effect on both the bodies and souls of those out of Christ.

Thus the truth of God, neither in his threatenings nor his promises, can be fulfilled, if the soul alone is to exist forever, since the soul is not the man, and cannot alone enjoy the rewards or suffer the penalties which the man deserves. It may be said that in reality (the body without the soul being not conscious) it is the soul which enjoys or suffers, but the body certainly enhances either sensibility. God is omnipotent, and could make the soul independent of this relation; but in doing so he would change the nature of his creature so as to take from him his full humanity, which lies, not in his soul or in his body, but in the union of both. If the soul of the sinner exist forever to suffer eternal death, the body of the sinner must exist forever to suf-

b. So, for the same reason, the *time* of the general resurrection will be the end of the world. We are careful to say *general* resurrection, because there have been, and possibly may be, particular instances of resurrection as proofs or preliminary samples of the great revival. It will be immediately previous to the final judgment, and when the execution of the mediatorial work is about closing. "I will raise him up," said our Lord, "at the last day." So the apostle: "At the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible;" while they which "shall remain," that is, be alive at the time (all of whom, we have reason for believing, will be just), "shall be changed," and "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (compare 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Again, the apostle (1 Cor. xv. 24) having spoken of the resurrection, says: "Then cometh the end, when he" (that is, the mediator) "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Thus we see that the resurrection of neither the righteous nor the wicked can take place until the *end* of the mediatorial kingdom.

c. The resurrection will be *universal*. This has been shown by each step of the previous argument. "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." So the apostle, in the Revelation, "saw the dead both small and great stand before God." It cannot be otherwise, as then the judgment would be neither universal nor complete. No objection to this can be taken from the silence of the apostle in the fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, respecting the resurrection of the wicked, as there he is treating specially of the victory over death vouchsafed to the righteous in Christ.

d. The *order* of the resurrection is, at least, suggested by the apostle, when he says: "Every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming." It is thus probable that the resurrection of the wicked will follow that of the righteous; especially, as all the texts which speak of them both put the righteous first. If, however, the righteous have not the precedence, the resurrection of both will be simultaneous at the last day. There are those, however, who think that they discover in Scripture a coming of our Lord (in person) and a resurrection of the righteous previously to the end of Christ's kingdom; and they cite in proof of their opinion a remarkable passage in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the twentieth of Revelation: "I saw thrones and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls" [or persons] "of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received the mark of the beast upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and his Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." That there is difficulty in reconciling this paragraph with other Scriptures, cannot with candor be denied; and if this were the only place where the resurrection was spoken of, or rather were there none declaring the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, we might infer that the martyred con-

fessors of the truth against the beast (for none others are named) were raised, and reigned with Christ for a period described as a thousand years in heaven, since it is not said that they reigned on earth. Yet then we should be troubled at the assertion that over them "the second death hath no power," since that would imply that all who were not martyred for resisting the beast were liable to suffer from the second death, which cannot be true of Christ's other most numerous people. No ingenuity, however, can rescue this passage from being highly figurative. The reference to the *key* and the *chain*, in the first verse, cannot be taken literally, and our ready inference is, that there is a mystical meaning here which the fulfilment of prophecy will make plain. The whole book of the Revelation is full of such mysticisms, and, though we catch glimpses of the truth from our knowledge of other Scriptures, no one has yet interpreted its prophecy, spiritually or literally, to the satisfaction of the evangelical church. Yet Scripture must be consistent with Scripture; and if we cannot open the meaning of this passage, we can at least be sure that the Scriptures which literally and plainly declare the time of Christ's coming to judgment to be the time of the general resurrection speak absolute truth. So that it were not wise to give up the doctrine of texts which all unite in saying must be taken literally, to follow a doubtful interpretation of a few verses in the most mystical book of the whole Bible. All should agree that the plain text should be the standard of interpretation, not the mystical. It is not consistent with our present duty to enter upon questions urged by those who adopt the notion of Christ's personal reign for a thousand

years on earth before he comes to judge the world; it is enough for us now that the concurrent testimony of many Scriptures assert the resurrection of all the righteous and the wicked at the last day. For what saith Job? "Man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of sleep." And what becometh of our Lord's own words? "*All* that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall live," — manifestly all at the one and the same hour of which he speaks. The particular instances of resurrection, which have from time to time occurred for special reasons of providence, do not impair the general fact; but the uprising of such a *multitude* as the martyrs slain under the fury of the beast would deny it.

The change in the bodies of those who shall be alive at Christ's coming with the last trump will be simultaneous with the resurrection of the dead, being for the same purpose.

e. Our *identical bodies* will be raised; else would it not be a resurrection but a new creation, which would defeat the end of the resurrection. The Saviour's identical body was raised, so shall ours be; for the one fact is inseparable from the other. According to Scripture, "*our* bodies," "*our vile* bodies," "*our mortal* bodies," are to be "quicken'd," "changed," "raised." So says the apostle: "*it* is sown," "*it* is raised." The self-same thing that is sown will be raised. "In my flesh," says Job, "I shall see God." Our Catechism is decided on this point: "This my body (or flesh), being raised, shall be reunited to my soul;" and so say the confessions of all orthodox or evangelical churches. How else can it be true that

all that are in the graves shall come forth ; and those that sleep in the dust shall awake : how that the *dead* shall be raised ? The deadness is not predicated of the soul, and it cannot be of a new body. How does the believer triumph over the grave, when it retains its hold of his true body ? An ancient doctor of the church truly says, that, to pretend to a belief in a resurrection with any other sense, is “ a trick of words.” And Josephus (in a fragment imputed to him) remarks, as the belief of the Jews, that “ the resurrection is not a migration of the soul from one body into another, but a raising up of the very same body.” Some have denied this. They say that the body is “ changed.” But change does not imply substitution, unless when a thing is said to be changed for another, which is not so in this case. Our Lord’s body was “ changed ” on Tabor. The heart is “ changed ” by the regeneration. Change does not destroy identicalness, but only transforms to another fashion or appearance. Again, they say : “ Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; ” but the very next phrase shows that it is corrupt flesh and blood : “ Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” The corruptibleness must be taken away from the body, hence the necessity of the change : “ For this corruptible must put on incorruption ; and this mortal, immortality.” The soul is neither corruptible nor mortal ; it must, therefore, be the body, now corruptible and mortal, which shall put on incorruption and immortality.

But the chief difficulty is as to the preservation of the body’s identity after its particles have been scattered, and many of them, it may be, made constituent particles of other bodies ; and sceptics go the length

of asserting that it is impossible in the nature of things. But let them first define what identity is, and show wherein it lies. So far as we can see, that which constitutes the identicalness of the body need not, and we believe will not, be lost. Our bodies are continually undergoing changes as to their particles ; some, indeed, say that these are entirely changed in the course of years ; yet are they not the same ? Is not the body of a man of fourscore the same, or identical with that which he was born with ? Is not the mighty oak, waving his branches over a wide space, identical with the little shoot that a hundred years ago peeped out of the acorn ? nay, with the germ in the acorn itself ? What, then, constitutes the actual essence of the body, and what its mere accidents ? The accidents change, we know ; but does the substantial essence change ? If a man loses an arm, is his body not the same ? If he loses eyes, ears, limbs, every part that he can lose without losing life, is he not the same man, and his body the same ? The truth is, neither identicalness nor substance have ever been defined ; and it is absurd to object undefinable terms to a plain fact of Scripture. The Jews, and the Mohammedans after them, have thought that the identity of the body lay in a certain indestructible portion of it,* a germ or nucleus around which the accidental particles of the body were agglomerated ; and which will be the germ or nucleus of the new body at the resurrection. The ingenious Drew, and some other eminent moderns, incline to the same opinion. This is, perhaps, unnecessary ; yet, when we know how the future form of the plant is

* This the Jews called the bone, *Liet* (*separation*?) and it corresponds to the *os coccygis*, or cuckoobill-shaped termination of the *sacrum*.

hidden in its tiny seed, or of the animal in the egg, we can see how very possible it is that from a very small portion of the former body may be evolved the resurrection body. In fact, there are processes every hour in nature showing exactly the Almighty skill and power which is required for the miracle of the resurrection. It is sufficient for us to be told that the body will be raised by the power of God. He will take care that its identicalness will be preserved, and that nothing will stand in the way of his purpose. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?"

f. Our bodies will be *changed*. The apostle (1 Cor. xv. 35, 44) illustrates this by the ordinary process of vegetation. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Properly, the germ does not die, but the husk, and other substance of the seed about it, corrupts and forms, as it were, the manure for the vital particle. So, "thou sowest not that body which shall be," — *i. e.* you do not put into the ground the stalk with its leaves and head, — "but bare" or naked "grain," or seed; "but God," after it has been sown and has germinated, "gives it a body as it has pleased him, and to every seed its own body." That is, according to the arrangements he has prescribed for himself, each different kind of seed produces its peculiar plant. A grain of rye does not produce a wheat-stalk, or a grain of wheat a barley-stalk. "So also is the resurrection of the dead." The body sown in the grave will produce its kind, or, rather, by the power of God, reproduce itself, but in a more enduring form. The transformation of the wicked is not described; but that of the righteous is depicted at length in the aforesaid

chapter of Corinthians, and elsewhere. The key to the whole, as stated by the Catechism, is to be found in the fact that the body of the believer shall be “made like unto the glorious body of Christ.” “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.” The body of the redeemed will be like the body which Christ now has glorified on the throne of heaven. His body was planted in the grave, wounded, dishonored, lifeless; it was raised from the grave to immortal glory. As is the first-fruits, “so shall be” all “that are Christ’s at his coming.” What his body was to be in glory, the Lord showed to the three apostolical witnesses when they beheld him transfigured in glory on the top of the holy mount Tabor; to which Peter and John always refer when they speak of having “beheld his glory.” So again the apostle Paul: “As we have borne the image of the earthy (the first Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (the second Adam).” The celestial body will differ from the terrestrial body correspondently as the sphere of its celestial activity differs from that of its terrestrial life. Christ was like us in all points except sin, and, because he had no sin, and because he had expiated sin, his body “did not see corruption;” but in every other respect we shall be changed from what we are to what he is. So the apostle: “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

Let us resume these particulars : “ It is raised in incorruption.” The curse of sin being taken away, and the body fully purged of its mortal tendencies, shall never more know pain or sickness or decay, but shall live immortally pure and fresh. “ It is raised in glory.” Death is a dishonor, the proof of cursedness ; but glory, the full presence, favor, and light of God, will be the portion of his children ransomed from shame by the merit of Christ. “ It is raised in power.” All its former weakness shall be left behind in the grave, and in their place it shall be endowed with untiring vigor and a divine energy. “ It is raised a spiritual body.” The phrase is at first sight contradictory of itself. Spirit seems to be the opposite of matter. Yet the body continues substantial while it becomes spiritual. The apostle’s meaning, however, evidently is, that, losing the grossness which it has by our present nature, it partakes, in ethereality and purity, of spirit. As in the transfiguration of Christ the Divine Spirit within him shone through his physical frame, pervading it with heavenly lustre, and making it like itself in a common glory, so the body of the believer, no longer a prison-house, hindering, oppressing, and animalizing the soul, shall be permeated, filled in every part, and beaming outwardly with the Godlike Spirit.

For, consider how this body will be derived : not from physical generation, but from the immediate power of God. How it will be sustained : not by food and drink, but the immediate favor of God. How it will be employed : not in labor, as here, consequent upon its natural necessities, but in the holy service of God. Hence the nature of the spiritual change. They

“neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God, being the children of God.” They “hunger no more, neither thirst any more.” They are never weary, and “no night” curtains them from the resplendent moon. Their activity is perpetual, and they feed on the “angels’ food” of divine truth and love and service, and they drink of the Holy Spirit, “the pure river of the water of life,” flowing in perpetual tide from the throne of God and the Lamb. Swift as angels, strong as cherubs, ardent as seraphs, glorious as Christ, there shall be no bound to their action, no limit to their aspirations, no measure to their energy but the nature of God, in whom they “live and move and have their being.”

If the bodies of the saints be fashioned after the body of Christ, after what fearfully opposite fashion shall be the bodies of the wicked? If everything be taken from the righteous that can hinder or annoy the jubilant soul, how must the flesh that has been abandoned to sin become the instrument of its own punishment! —strong, only to be more sensitive of pain; indestructible, only that its anguish may be eternal. We shrink now from the slightest bodily pain, and in extremity of suffering look to death as a relief; but no death blesses the damned immortal. See in the pains of men here the fruit of sin, in the diseases and deformities that follow intemperance and lust,—how vice reacts upon the transgressor; yet here God is long-suffering and waits to be gracious. What must that death, that pain, that disease be, which shall punish the sinner, when God withdraws his restraining hand and gives the retribution full sweep! O who among us can lie down in everlasting burning? “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!”

FIRST: The doctrine of the resurrection should fill the believer with lively joy. So it affected all the apostles. Then only do they enter upon the full fruition of eternal life, and obtain a perfect victory over sin and death and hell. We do believe that “the souls of the righteous at their death immediately pass into glory”; but the soul is not all of man, and his body is necessary to his completeness. We are forced to complain of the body now as a clog, a temptation, and a tormentor; but it is so only because it is a “body of sin and death.” The body was intended as a servant and helpmate to the soul, to aid its perceptions, to minister to its pleasure, to act out its purposes. Man is thus more wonderful than the angel, and of larger and more varied sphere; for he unites in his own person the two grand departments of creation,—spirit and matter. He was formed to derive his happiness and his means of glorifying God from both. He can neither know God, nor serve him, nor enjoy him so well, without his body as he can with it, if sin and its effects be taken away. Therefore should we earnestly desire and long for that blessed day when our bodies shall again be made pure, more glorious than in their first creation, and safe in their spiritual youth forever. Like the apostle, we should pray for deliverance from the “body of sin and death”; but also, like him, “expect with uplifted head” the full restoration of our humanity to the image of God; as Paul says, after speaking of our transitory afflictions and the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”: “We know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle (σκηνὴ, tent, as of a pilgrim) were dissolved, we have a building (οἰκοδομὴν, an edifice, or permanent structure) of God (ἐκ Θεοῦ, from God), a house

not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." So in another: "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." The resurrection completes the adoption, because only then the whole man is restored in blessing to his Father's heavenly house. Thanks! Thanks! "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" But oh! how careful should we be to preserve from shame and pollution here the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is destined to such glory hereafter!

What a glorious assembly will surround the throne of our once crucified but now exalted Redeemer! What a horrible crowd of sufferers there will be of those who served to the evil pleasures of the flesh!

Gather us, O God of love, with thy people. Amen!

The third head is included by the next article, "The Life Everlasting," and will be treated in our study of the 58th Question and Answer.

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

TWENTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

[N our last lecture, following the Catechism on what occurs to the believer "after this life," we proposed to inquire

FIRST: *What becomes of the soul?*

SECONDLY: *What becomes of the body?*

THIRDLY: *What will be the final state of both body and soul?*

The first and second inquiries we answered so far as God gave us help. It now remains for us to answer

THIRDLY: *What will be the final or eternal state of both body and soul?*

This we reserved for our discussion of the article of THE LIFE EVERLASTING, when his body and soul being inseparably reunited, the redeemed man shall be perfect and perfectly blessed.

A more delightful subject of pious meditation cannot be found in all the range of Christian truth. It fitly crowns the noble symbol of our holy catholic evangelical faith; for eternal life is the consummation of God's eternal purpose concerning his church, the great end for which he sent his only-begotten Son to be our Saviour, the full reward of the Redeemer's mediatorial work, the triumph of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying grace, and the entire satisfaction of the Christian's desiring hope. Yet should we not approach it rashly, but inquire of the holy oracle with reverent caution and humble faith; for our knowledge of things eternal and

heavenly must in this life be poor and weak, nor ought we to venture a single step beyond what is clearly revealed by him who inhabiteth eternity. All that it is profitable for us to know, he has taught us in his Word, and what he has not taught us, it is profane to guess. The apostle Paul had a miraculous vision of heaven, but declared that it was "not lawful for him to utter" what he there heard; and our Catechism cites his words, himself quoting from the prophet Isaiah (lxiv. 4): "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). We can now see only through a glass, mercifully shaded for our feeble sight, but the dim perception exceeds the brightest glory of earth and time. Indeed, were there no other proof that the Bible came from God, the description which it gives of the blessedness of heaven would be enough, so far does it transcend the loftiest achievements of human genius. Let us, then, take our stand on the Pisgah of promise, and strive to catch through the mists that hang over the stream of death some glimpses of Beulah, the beautiful land, and of the Jerusalem in the midst of it, where is our inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved" for those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." There Jesus the forerunner hath for us entered, and thither the light streaming down through the rent vail will guide all his people. The contemplation will, by the grace of the Spirit, increase our love to God, our zeal in his service, our patience under his discipline, and our strength for the honorable burdens of duty.

The Catechism (after Scripture) asserts of "the

life everlasting" three things, the order of which, for logical convenience, we may change : —

I. That it is the perfection of salvation, the fulness of which no mortal mind can comprehend.

"After this life, I shall inherit eternal salvation, which eye hath not seen," &c.

II. That a principal part of this blessedness will consist in glorifying God.

"And that to praise God therein forever."

III. That the Christian has the beginning of it in this world.

"I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy."

Before entering upon these heads, let us ascertain the Scriptural uses of the term "life," which are three : the vital principle ; the duration of animated existence ; the enjoyment of divine favor.

A. What the vital principle, or that which gives vigor to organized being, is, no skill of man has been able to define or discover. It seems as if the Author of life had thrown around it inscrutable mystery ; but that there is a principle, without which the most perfect organization were inert, and losing which would dissolve, is evident ; and this is called life. Life holds the organization together, and maintains in exercise its appropriate functions. Thus we read : "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Hebrew, *lives*). The body, with all its wonderful anatomy complete, was formed out of dust ; it was in appearance and reality a human body ; but it was not a *living* body ; the several parts of its exquisite machinery were still and insensible ; there was no motive power, no pervading

energy, until God inspired it with life : then all began to act ; the man was alive ; he had become “ a living soul,” or person.* The breath was not the life, but life gave the power of breathing the air essential to its support, though it may be inferred that the inspiration of breath by the power of God gave the first impulse to the respiratory organs. Man became a living soul ; but even should we believe that soul refers absolutely to the spiritual part of man’s nature, which he, undoubtedly, at that moment received, we must not suppose that the soul was the animating principle, since other animals have corporeal life in common with man ; nor can we discover any difference between animal life in man and in the brute. There was thus a life, not arising from the corporeal organization, but communicated subsequently to its having been formed out of the dust. The soul being infused at the same moment that the animal life was given, the man in his double nature, body and soul, was complete ; but the animating principle, or life, was not either body or soul, nor was it consequent upon the union of the two, but something distinct from both ; yet, according to the constitution of man, holding them together ; so that should the life be withdrawn, the union of body and soul is dissolved, and the body returns to its dust. It follows that, if the force of life be in any degree impaired, the acting of the bodily functions must be correspondently hindered and disordered ; so that weakness, pain, disease, and altogether the present tendency of our bodies to disso-

* This translation of the Hebrew term is justified by comparison of sacred Scriptures. See remarks on *Soul* in the lecture on the Descent into Hell. To suppose that the spiritual soul was the *breath of God* would be to adopt the theory of *emanation*, which is opposed to the Scripture doctrine of universal creation.

lution, prove the depravation of the animating principle, and that death, the opposite of life, has begun its work. Thus, when man sinned, the threatened sentence of death passed upon him. "In the day," the self-same day, "thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam lived (in common language) many years before his actual death, but from the moment of his sin he began to die. What we call death was the finishing of the mortal process. So has "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The resurrection of the bodies of all men immediately before the judgment shows that God, when creating man, intended him for a never-ending existence, body and soul; so that death as the punishment of sin cannot be annihilation, but must mean, as in the bodies of the wicked after the judgment, such a curse as turns its qualities and functions into sources of pain and misery; while, on the other hand, the eternal life which God bestows on the bodies of the righteous will be an indestructible, never-failing vigor, preserving it from all the ills that flesh is now heir to, in a perpetual youth, symmetry, and beauty, — nay, doubtless, continually and forever developing its pure properties and enhancing its genuine delights.

The soul, we are accustomed, and rightly, to consider an uncompounded spirit, that is, without any articulation of parts such as constitute the substantial body. Yet we have melancholy evidence that the soul may lose its healthfulness and justness of action, nay, become diseased and disordered; so that it is not pushing analogy too far if we believe that the soul, also, has a life other than its spiritual nature, — a life which God gives or restrains as in his holy will he chooses. When

that vital energy is in any degree withdrawn, the soul sickens, is disturbed, and wars against itself. This death is the penalty of sin, now operating in a partial manner, but after the judgment having its full effect on the conscious soul in unspeakable and utter anguish; so the eternal life, which will reign in the glorified spirit of the redeemed, will be a Godward energy, pervading all its faculties, affections, and dispositions with a holy strength and ever-increasing delight.

Nay, we discover in many passages of Scripture that there is a life peculiar to the moral being of man. The effect of sin is, clearly, to deprive us of power to do good. We were utterly "without strength," had not "Christ died for the ungodly." Our "whole head is sick, and" our "whole heart is faint." Hence, we are plainly told that Christ must give us life before we can again serve God. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" and "the life is the light of men." The quarrel of Christ with us fallen sinners is, not that we do not serve him with our own present strength, for we have none, but that we will not come unto him that we may have life, a new life given in regeneration, the renewal of that energy for good which was lost by the fall, though in a higher degree. "I am come," saith the Saviour, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again, he says, "I give unto them eternal life." This moral revivification is, we know, imparted by the Holy Ghost, and is maintained by his dwelling in the soul; but yet it is the effect of the Holy Ghost, not the Holy Ghost himself. There can be no doubt of such an energy being wrought in the soul. Call it by what name you will, there must be

communication of moral ability, which we have not by nature, before we can do the works of God; and this principle, imparted by regeneration, becomes thenceforward and forever a property of the soul itself, because it is the free unrevocable gift of Christ. It is to our moral nature what animal life is to the body; and the aforecited texts warrant us in calling it life. The animal life is not the body, but pervades it; the life of the soul is not the soul, but pervades it; so the moral life is not our moral nature, but pervades it. It is begun the moment we believe in Christ; the believer is conscious of its genial warmth, though here it struggles with many hindrances; and after the soul's admission to the presence of God in heaven, it will be perfect, unchecked, exulting in every pulse of the sanctified, glorified, Christ-like heart.

B. The second sense which the Scriptures give to *life*, is, the duration of animated existence. Employing ordinary phraseology, the sacred writers give the name *life* to the period of our existence here. "What is your life?" asks the apostle; "it is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." So, when recognizing the immortality of the soul, we say that it will *live forever*, whether in doom or in bliss; though eternal life, especially and eminently, describes the unending existence of the righteous in heaven.

C. The third sense which we note is, the enjoyment of the divine favor. As death is instant on the wrath of God, so is life on his favor. We are also accustomed to call that which gives to life its value and delight, *life*, intensifying its sense. Without happiness, life has the gloom of death, and, by a natural figure, that which

confers a second happiness, even the favor of God, may well be denominated "the life of life." But as this sense, being rhetorical, is covered by the former two, we speak of it here only to remind ourselves from Scripture that there is no true health or bliss or moral goodness, in this world or the next, that is not derived from the favor of God, which can reach us sinners only through the mediatorial merits of his Son Jesus Christ. "With thee is the fountain of life," says the Psalmist; "in thy light shall we see light."

From these considerations and Scriptures, we learn what are the elements of "eternal life," and to perceive the excellence of the several statements respecting it in the lesson of the Catechism for to-day.

1. The definition: "Life everlasting" is "*perfect salvation*," the fulness of which no mortal mind can comprehend.

Man came from the Creator's hand in the possession of perfect life, health, and full vigor in his body, mind, and moral nature, the image of God reflected from his soul, and securing to him the favor of God and a correspondent participation of divine pleasures. So in the first covenant, which was between God and man immediately (*i. e.* man himself), there is no promise of life to his obedience; he had life already, but only a threatening of death on his disobedience: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Had he continued obedient, he would have been ever in harmony with the divine character and will, and, consequently, with the divine administration of all things, so that nothing in himself or in outward things could have impaired his powers or his happiness. Yet his life, being contingent on his own merits, could not be said

to be absolutely eternal, since it might be, as it was, lost. When he sinned, so transgressing the laws imposed upon his moral being, he violated that harmony between him and God, putting himself into conflict with the divine will and administration, the consequence of which could be none other than destruction and misery. The wrath of God took the place of God's favor; the laws of nature, against which he dashed himself, shivered his being by his own force against their irresistible steadfastness; and drinking in his thirst from other springs than those of the divine pleasures, he could derive from them only misery, — since, as God is infinitely blessed, what God draws no satisfaction from must be evil, and only evil, to his moral creatures. Death, therefore, came upon man, not only from the adjudged penalty, but also, and as a providential necessity, from the eternal nature of things.

It is to be noted that the sin which “brought in death and all our woe,” involved the depraved action of the entire man. His heart withdrew his affectionate reverence for God's parental authority, trust in God's parental wisdom, and reliance upon God's parental care. His will, following a perverted judgment, chose a method for his welfare adversely opposite to that which God had proposed to him, and his reasoning was as untrue as his heart was unfaithful. His senses were abused to stimulate a wicked lust for the thing forbidden, by tampering with the beauty and fragrance and relish of the fruit, in the eating of which he proposed to himself the acquisition of an ungodly knowledge. His hand and mouth consented to put within his body the seeds which he was forewarned

were fatal. Hence death came upon his whole nature, — his body, his spirit, and his moral faculties ; because each and all were in opposition to him, who is the only source of life and blessedness. His body became corruptible, his understanding dark and erring, his heart depraved ; all at variance with each other and with all the order of the divine government, because at variance with God himself ; for great as is the conflict which the sinner enters into with external things, there is a yet greater conflict which his human nature finds within himself ; — the flesh, the judgment, the heart, his appetites, his choice, his reason, and his desires, no longer respecting each other's safe limits, but abusing, deceiving, enslaving, and torturing each other, provoking each other's vengeance, and accomplishing on each other and themselves the vengeance of God.

The full execution of the sentence is not accomplished, because of the remedial plan proclaimed immediately after the fall ; nor will be until, after the resurrection, the mediatorial Judge will complete the divine justice upon all who reject his grace, in their eternal death. But even now in the restrained degree of that wrath, what fearful evidence do we see of this suicidal, general war of man against himself, and man against his brother ! If right reason prevailed, his desires, his affections, his appetites, would be all controlled by the just and not invisible laws which God has set for them ; now itself seduced, its perceptions blinded, under its depraved bias, reason struggles against itself, sets its ingenuity to defend error, pleads for crime, and justifies revolt even from its own logic, or, at a loss for further sophistry, abandons its royal prerogative, and serves like a captive consenting to degradation, a willing slave to

the imbruted flesh. Thus erring and extravagant beyond the limits of divine rule, man blunders and entangles himself with the interests of others, to which, were all faithful, there would be perpetual accord ; until envy, fraud, falsehood, jealousy, hate, rapine, and murder break the securities of social peace, load the painful earth with almshouses and prisons, arm nations against nations with the very sulphureous fires of hell, and deluge the fields, eager for harvests of plenty, in floods of human gore. If such be the death which sin brings upon man even while the Saviour pleads, what must be its horrible throes and burnings and cruelties in that world of fiends, where the wrath of the Lamb will abandon the world of human transgressors to the unchecked and ever-increasing fury of their own passions and eternal hates.

Now, says our instructor, eternal life is perfect salvation. It is, and has been from all eternity, the blessed purpose of God to rescue, through Christ, the lost sinner who will accept the grace from eternal death, and by consequence to endow the penitent believer with a new life ; and as this mercy and love is justified, not by any merit of his own, but solely through the atoning merits of Christ, so its perpetuity, not contingent on man's fallible obedience, but bestowed freely in reward of Christ's infinite merit, becomes secure, and the new life is eternal. This new, infallible life is more than the effect of pardon. The sentence of death was, indeed, the sovereign act of God ; but it was also in entire, we may even say necessary, consistence with his holy nature, and holy administration of things ; so that the mere pardon, were it possible, would yet leave man in the natural deplorable consequences of his rebellion

against the order of his own nature and the laws of the universe. Hence there must be a restoration of life from God to man, life in his moral being, life in his soul, life in his body, so that all may be brought into and secured in a vigorous, harmonious activity and delight: vigorous, because maintained by the divine power of the giver; harmonious and delightful, because in harmony with the will of the ever-blessed and gracious God.

This salvation is promised, and in heaven will be accomplished for all that believe, — perfect life for the moral being, perfect life for the reason, perfect life for the body. There, in that second more glorious paradise, the believer shall enjoy life immeasurably more abundant than that of which sin has robbed us, because it will be wrought in us, through the intercession of Christ, by the creative energy and indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. There the heart, filled with the love of God, will forever be above weakness or temptation; the reason, filled with the light of God, will never know shade, bias, or error; and the body, purged from all grossness by the transformation of the grave and the resurrection, animated in every part with ever-youthful health, and spiritualized into a near likeness of the transfiguring soul, will forever serve, assist, and enhance the blessedness of its immortal spirit; and the entire man be so perfect, as to be perfectly holy, wise, and vigorous, but not so perfect that he will cease to ascend higher and higher, expanding more and more, enjoying greater and greater bliss, because more and more like God. Were either element of this eternal life withheld, the bliss and salvation would be incomplete. The purest heart would suffer from an erring

or a weak mind, the noblest intellect from a diseased or feeble body ; but the gospel promises the perfection of all ; and only in faith upon that revelation can the man, called of God in Christ Jesus, say, as he looks up from the sorrows, infirmities, follies, and sins of this present world : “ When I awake with thy likeness,” O God, “ I shall be *satisfied*.”

Oh, what peace, what strength, what consciousness of truth, what self-delight, what Godlike energy of thought and love and purpose, shall be accounted worthy to enter that kingdom on whose throne Christ sits, the second Adam, the representative of the penitent, and the pattern of his glorified ones ! Faint are our guesses, because, though the revelation be rich, our sin-weakened souls cannot take in the glory. “ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, O God, the things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee ! ”

But, blessed be thy name, what we “ know not now, we shall know hereafter ! ”

“ No sin to cloud, no lure to stay
The soul as on she springs ;
Thy light upon her joyous way,
Thy sunshine on her wings ! ”

Nor may we deny ourselves the edification and happiness of completing the contrast of eternal life to the evils and miseries which sin has brought upon our fallen race. Man is essentially a social being, bound to his fellows by indissoluble ties, communicating and deriving happiness or misery, as righteousness or sin produce their effects on individual character. We see what sin has wrought in the crimes and conflicts of the world ; but in that new world, among the ransomed

race of the second Adam, the personal life of the believer will appear beyond all imagination more grand, glorious, and full of rapture, in the life of the whole countless company! Each will see in every other of his Christ-like brethren the image of his own God; the same exulting consent to eternal truth; the same adoring love of the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier; the same burning zeal of service, thanksgiving, and praise; the same beauty of form and countenance, radiant as Christ's transfigured on the mount; no sorrow in his own heart, no doubt in his own mind, no weakness in his own flesh; and no sympathy with another's pain, or pity for another's error, or yearning over another's unbelief. All are as holy and as happy as himself; and as they move each after his own sanctified will on the various offices and errands of heavenly duty, there is neither shock nor confusion; and as they unite their voices in unanimous joy, there is not amidst the innumerable chorus one discordant note or faltering cadence or minor accident. There, there shall be no envy, for all shall be rich in God; nor strife, for all shall be satisfied. Oh, what a world will it be where shall be no sick-bed, no watcher beside the helpless sufferer, no grave, no mourner, no dread of harm to those we love! — no clamor, no wrong, no murder, no battle! — but peace, like a cloudless noon, will fill the atmosphere with golden radiance, and every spirit overflow with love and joy and sympathy of perfect bliss. It must follow,

II. That a principal part of this blessedness will consist in glorifying God.

“And that to praise God therein forever.”

The most lively idea we get of heaven from the

scriptural revelations is that of a vast throng of glorified saints and radiant angels standing around the throne of God and the Lamb, singing to their golden harps responsive and symphonious hallelujahs ; cherubim and seraphim, angel and archangel, admiring and applauding the divine attributes and works ; ransomed sinners joining in the doxologies, but celebrating in strains, at once more tender and exulting, the wondrous mysteries of redeeming love, which brought them from the depths of sin and shame and misery to the height of holy, glorious, triumphant life. Not that such exultations are all the employ of heaven. The active natures of the happy myriads have other faculties to be enlisted in the divine honor. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the conceptions of man to conjecture the methods of gratitude in which they will display their love and admiration of the divine Benefactor ; doubtless there will be many and various services of the divine will in that exalted sphere of truth and holiness ; but the intention of the Holy Ghost is to teach us that praise will be the spirit and motive of all the heavenly engagements. Now and since the fall, the church on earth has been struggling on against sin, and opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil, hoping, desiring, anticipating, praying for grace and victory, but yet not in possession of the exceeding great and precious things promised by the everlasting covenant. Even our divine Lord and example in the days of his flesh made supplication for help and succour with strong crying and tears, while for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame ; and now maketh continual intercession for his followers as they are fighting their way up from the vale of tears

to the heights of the celestial Zion, expecting till his and their enemies are put under his feet. But then, when the ransomed of the Lord have all reached home, with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (*vide* Isaiah xxxv. 10), the mighty work will have been accomplished; the sword and the shield will be flung aside, that the hands may strike the golden strings, or bear aloft the victor's palm. There will be no more need of prayer, for the Redeemer's own soul will be satisfied; no more space for longing desire, for all shall be filled with glory: faith will have done her office, and, standing beside the throne, point backward to the manger and the cross; while hope, calmly leaning on her anchor, will look onward along the ever-opening ages, spanned by the rainbow, and see naught but ever-increasing developments of perfect life; and love, having cast her crown at the feet of her Lord, will ask, "What shall I render for all these benefits?" — and memory will recall with never-wearying repetitions all the loving-kindnesses of that redeeming grace, which led and sustained and comforted the pilgrim all along his weary way to the rest and plenty of his Father's house. Wide as heaven is, strong as the glorified faculties will be, there then can be found neither space nor energy for aught but praise, — praise "forever telling, yet untold."

And that the believer may be assured of his heavenly inheritance, he has the earnest of it even here.

III. He feels in his heart the beginning of eternal joy. "In him," (Christ,) says the apostle, "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eternal life is given to us the moment that we believe, — not

the fulness of life everlasting, but the actual beginning of it. It is begun in feebleness, like the life of a newborn babe ; but it is the same life which shall animate and give celestial vigor to the man made perfect in Christ Jesus. It is begun by the indwelling of the same spirit which will irradiate the saints on high with divine glory. It is the Spirit of Christ which implants the image of Christ, at once the seal and sum of heavenly perfection ; as by the Holy Ghost the child who now sits the man Christ Jesus on his peerless throne, “ Christ in you the hope of glory.” Hence it follows that there must be correspondent manifestations in the believer. The life eternal must show itself in the growing change of his whole nature from the death of sin. “ You hath he quickened which were dead in trespasses and sins.” Thus there will be new life in our moral faculties. “ Ye are his workmanship,” says the apostle, “ created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” This is more than persuasion, more even than light. It is the communication of a new principle. “ Ye have not chosen me,” saith our Lord, “ but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit might remain.” It is the blessed purchase of Christ for his people, and his gift to his people, — the purchase and gift of him who died for the ungodly, and those who are without strength, that he might “ save his people from their sins ” ; and this he does by sending his Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to beget them to a new and holy life, which though begun and carried gradually on amidst their remaining sins and infirmities, he will by the same spirit consummate in everlasting glory. Hence the believer, though once without God in the

world, not subject to the law of God, and utterly incapable of such obedience, his heart enmity against God, and his will as prone to evil as the sparks naturally fly upward, is now changed in all his aims, purposes, and desires. He loves God; he has in his heart the spirit of a child, and is conscious of a strength not his own to do the things he loves and desires to do. His love, his strength, his desires are not perfect as they should be; he is yet compassed about with infirmity, temptation, and sin; but grace is in his heart, struggling with them all, and, if he is faithful at the throne of grace, daily achieving some victory, and making progress to his final perfection. The tide of his soul has changed, and where it once flowed in a fearful ebb downward to death, it now takes a flood toward God and heaven. Every believer, not perhaps always, or at least not always in an equal degree, is conscious of this, and he rejoices in the gift, and in the hope of eternal life, of which it is the earnest and the assurance. But when the love of God, the law of God, the glory of God are not the ruling motives of our present life, when the direction of our desires, the aim of our hopes, are not toward the holiness of heaven, we have no warrant to expect that we shall escape the bitter pains of eternal death. The life must be begun here, or it will never be ours beyond the grave. Faith — faith the gift of God, faith fruitful of good works — alone is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

As with moral life, so is it with life in the understanding. We are by nature alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us. Sin has depraved our judgment and distorted our perceptions.

Whatever reason we may have about other matters, (and there our best reason is full of error,) we have, and can have, no true knowledge of holy things. The eyes of our understanding must be enlightened before we can receive divine teaching. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." There must, therefore, be given to the understanding a new life, an invigorating principle holding the faculties together in a just order, freeing it from prejudice, prompting it in the course of truth, and causing it to rise upward to the source of light. So the apostle: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." Nay, the Scripture everywhere characterizes the ungodly as fools; and fools they are, whatever be their genius or attainments in other things, when we consider their aversion to God, their murmuring against his requirements, or their fond search after what perishes in the using, and brings death on their souls. On the other hand, the effect of religion is to strengthen the reason and control the judgment, so that not only in religious matters, but in all things, the understanding is improved and improvable. "The entrance of thy word giveth life, it giveth understanding to the simple." Within the sphere of religious ideas, the effect of the new life is unmistakably regeneration. The love of God, the preference of eternity, the desire for the Saviour's glory, help the mind to turn from the motives of self and sin, fill it with dignified aims, and surround it with a healthy medium through which to consider things in their true light. Hence, one of the first evidences of the regeneration is a new sense of the divine Word.

It speaks to us; we are conscious of its bearing upon us, and it has an authority which we cannot resist, and would not if we could. We see the shortness of this life, and look through it to eternity. Its precepts guide us, its promises strengthen us, its doctrines enlighten us; and, above all, its exhibitions of Christ and his person and his love charm and delight us. It is the beginning of that knowledge which shall be the consummate science of heaven. But where there is no sense of this new vigor in Christian understanding, and the revelations of God and heaven have no attraction to our study, we have no evidence of a divine life in our souls. So, also, as the passions and appetites warp and bias the reason of a "natural man," urging him to transgress the laws which God has set between him and his neighbor,—when the love of God rules his heart, and the light of God his mind, will his life be virtuous, honest, faithful, and kind in all his relations to his fellow-men; and he who does not find that his religion moves him to peace and justice and kindness and charity and mercy toward his fellows, has no warrant to expect admittance to that heaven where all is love and mutual joy in the happiness of all.

As for the animal life, which has been so greatly impaired by sin, it must continue in its course to the dissolution of the grave. The vigor of eternal life is not promised to us until after the resurrection. Yet, even now, some evidences of its returning power, or at least the methods of that invigoration, may be seen. As sin corrupts the body, as evil passions in the soul shake and undermine its power and health,—so that even heathen moralists taught that vice is its own

avenger, — a faithful observance of the divine laws has ordinarily a most beneficial influence upon the physical man, not only in restraining it from excesses, or sparing it from the exhausting effects of immoderate orgasms and the fevers of impatient lust, from the injuries of provoked violence and the rash dangers of headlong passions, — but also in husbanding its strength by the calm virtues of continence, temperance, and good-will. Human life has its limits, beyond which the best conduct cannot prolong it; but no one can doubt that those limits have been greatly contracted by vice and violence and hereditary taints of vitiated blood. Were the world inhabited only by virtuous and peaceable people, the grave would not so soon claim the bodies of men. So he who does not learn from his religion to keep his body under, by a wise self-discipline, who wastes the powers he should use for God, or wickedly impairs them by his indulgence of secret thoughts of crime and excesses of appetite, cannot hope for the life of heaven when in his flesh, now abused and prostituted, he shall stand before God in the judgment. God will have mercy on our infirmities, for he knows that we are but dust; yet whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. “For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Let us, then, daily keep in view our eternal life. So shall we in this present world inherit the best blessings of earth, and at last be full of joy in the light of God's countenance! Amen.

LECTURE XXIX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OPENED.

TWENTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE DOCTRINE OPENED.

QUEST. LIX. *But what doth it profit thee now that thou believest all this?*

ANS. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and am heir of eternal life.

QUEST. LX. *How art thou righteous before God?*

ANS. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ: so that though my conscience accuse me that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God; and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil, notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me, inasmuch as I embraced such a benefit with a believing heart.

QUEST. LXI. *Why sayest thou that thou art righteous by faith only?*

ANS. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but only because the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself in any other way than by faith only.

THE lesson for to-day demands our best attention. It gives the only answer to that question which all religions have sought to solve: "How can man be justified with God?" (Job xxv. 4,) by setting forth concisely and clearly the great protestant, evangelical doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

God, who devised and executed the gracious plan by which he is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, alone could declare it. It is, therefore, purely a doctrine of revelation; and the business of reason is, simply to inquire what is taught concerning

this way of mercy in the holy Scriptures, and especially to mark the relations which the several truths comprehended by it bear to each other.

In attempting this, the wide range of our subject requires us to imitate the conciseness of our instructor, and we shall, without farther preface, follow closely his order.

The Answer to the 59th Question declares THE FACT that the believer is *righteous* before God.

The Answer to the 60th Question, THE REASON why he is righteous before God to be, solely because “God, without any merit of his, but only of mere grace, grants and *imputes to him the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ.*”

And the Answer to the 61st Question, THE MANNER in which he becomes a partaker of the righteousness of Christ to be by faith only, “not that he is acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of his faith, but only “because he cannot receive and apply to himself” “the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ” “in any other way than by faith.”

The whole discussion may then be conducted under two inquiries:

FIRST: *What is meant by being righteous before God?* And

SECONDLY: *How the Christian, though a sinner, is righteous before God?*

FIRST: *What is meant by being righteous before God?*

In order properly to understand the scriptural statement of the doctrine before us, it is necessary to remember that God is represented as dealing with the sinner in the character of a judge. Hence the language is that used to describe *legal* transactions, and the

terms are to be taken in a forensic or juridical sense (*i. e.* as they are taken in courts of law). Not that God patterns his justice after that of men ; for in the exercise of that attribute, as in everything else, his ways are infinitely “above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts” ; but he graciously condescends to explain his truth by such words as are best adapted to our capacities and habits of thought. Hence man is said to be under “a law” ; to be brought “into judgment” or trial, to be “condemned” or “justified,” to be “guilty” or “righteous.”

Justification, in this forensic sense, is the opposite of *condemnation*. Thus the apostle : “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died” (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Justification does not *make* the person who has been under trial just or righteous. It is only the act *pronouncing* him just or righteous in the eye of the law, *i. e.* free from all charges against him.* “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifieth.” Yet was every one of that elect personally and really a sinner. So condemnation does not make the person who has been under trial, a sinner, unjust, or unrighteous. It only pronounces him liable to the penalties of sin, injustice, or unrighteousness. “Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died.” Which means, that “there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. xii. 1), because, though they are actually sinners, Christ, by the interposition of his death, has satisfied the law on their behalf, and they are consequently free from the punishment to which

* See Booth’s *Reign of Grace*.

they would otherwise have been condemned. So nothing is more frequent in Scripture than distinctions between justification by the law or by works, and justification by faith,—the righteousness which is of the law, and the righteousness of faith. Thus the apostle: “By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom. iii. 20); and again: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” When using the term *righteous*, he says: “It is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. iii. 10); and in Hebrews he speaks of Noah becoming “heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (xi. 7). In Philippians he declares his desire to be found in Christ, “not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (iii. 9). To be righteous in the sight of God, as the term is used here by our instructor, does not mean to be actually righteous in one’s self, because he says “righteous in Christ,” but to be declared, accounted, and treated as righteous in the eye of the law by God.

Now the law of God is twofold. It forbids wrong deeds under severe penalties, and requires good deeds with promises of reward. Righteousness, therefore, in the eye of God’s law, is to be considered as twofold: *negative*, freedom from wrong-doing; and *positive*, the doing of right.

It is true that, in one sense, not to do right is to do wrong, and to do wrong is not to do right. Yet we mark the distinction between negative and positive righteousness, because, in order to the enjoyment of God’s favor, which is bestowed only in reward of right-

eousness, it is necessary that, besides the pardon of our sins, which but frees us from the penalties of the law, we should have a positive merit before God to entitle us to the rewards of the law. Thus our instructor bids the believer say, not merely that he is "righteous before God," but also that he is "an heir of eternal life."

To be perfectly righteous in the sight of God is, *to be free from all the penalties, and entitled to all the rewards of his holy law.* We are now prepared for **OUR SECOND** inquiry: How the Christian, though a sinner, is righteous before God?

And under this head we shall consider

1. *The reason*; and
 2. *The manner* of his being righteous before God.
1. *The reason.*

A. It is not because of any righteousness personally his own; for he acknowledges that his righteousness or justification is "notwithstanding his conscience doth accuse him of having grossly transgressed all the commandments of God and kept none of them, and his being still inclined to all evil, so that he has no merit of his own."

We shall not stay here to show the entire absence of all righteousness from the soul of every living child of Adam, and our entire corruption in sin. This has in former discourses been argued fully before you. It is sufficient now to repeat that God has declared, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Christ Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost," "to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." The magnitude of that provision of mercy

which has been made in the mediation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate and suffering for us, is clear proof that there can be no salvation for us by our own merit ; for “if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain ” (Gal. ii. 21). Our great apostle Paul knew nothing of salvation out of Christ. He had some dreams of the kind while yet an unbelieving pharisee, but when he came to see the full force and wide extent of the law of God, all hope of saving himself died within him (Rom. vii. 9) ; and after he had been long a preacher of that faithful saying, “ Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” he still acknowledges himself “the chief of sinners ” (1 Tim. i. 15). Those, therefore, who desire and think to be saved by their own righteousness, must go elsewhere than to the gospel for a warrant of their hope. They have neither part nor lot in Christ’s salvation. The Bible has nothing to do with them but to condemn them ; “for he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God ” (John iii. 18).

B. It is because of the merit of Jesus Christ.

Thus the instructor says, “ God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ ; even so as if I had never committed any sin ; yea, as if I had accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me.” And that this language is in agreement with Scripture, is clear from what the apostle says (Rom. iii. 21–28) : “ Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and prophets : Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ

unto all, and *upon* all them that believe : for there is no difference : For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God : Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God : To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness ; that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

We have seen, that, to be righteous in the sight of God, is to be *free from all the penalties* and *entitled to all the rewards* of his holy law. But such a righteousness the Christian can never obtain for himself, because, as a sinner who has come short of the glory of God, he has not only forfeited all claims to the rewards, but has become obnoxious to all the penalties of the law ; which, as they include eternal death, it is impossible for him ever perfectly to exhaust. Except, therefore, some other method of justifying him than his own righteousness be provided, his salvation is impossible. Here, (blessed be the name of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !) the wisdom and power of the mercy of God comes to our help.

Christ, the Son of God, incarnate in our nature, condescends, according to covenant with the Father, to become the Saviour of the sinner. In accomplishing this blessed work, he offered himself to bear the penalties of the law which the sinner had incurred. The sacrifice was accepted by God when he took the life of

Jesus upon the cross. Besides this, during the whole of his life upon earth, he honored the law of God by a perfect obedience, and thus became entitled himself to all the rewards of righteousness. Christ Jesus, therefore, as the Saviour, and in the place or room of the sinner, made himself perfectly righteous in the sight of the law : *negatively* righteous, inasmuch as he had discharged fully all the penalties of the law ; and *positively* righteous, as by a perfect obedience he earned all the rewards of the law. Now the doctrine of the Scripture and the argument of the Catechism is, that God accepts and acknowledges this whole righteousness of Christ in place of, or as a substitute for, that righteousness which the believer ought to have rendered in his own person, but could not ; so that in Christ, or through Christ, the believer, though himself a sinner, becomes perfectly righteous in the sight of the law, being set free from all its penalties and entitled to all its rewards. Thus the Catechism : “ God grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction (that is the expiation), righteousness (that is the obedience), and holiness (that is the acceptableness) of Christ, even so as if I had never had nor committed any sins (because all his sins have been expiated), yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience which Christ hath accomplished for me.”

He says, God “ *grants* ” this righteousness, because it was of mere grace that God provided this righteousness ; it was his purpose to save which led him to the provision of that righteousness ; and having provided it, he may bestow its benefits upon whom he will, although he promises and offers those benefits to all who will believe. They who believe become entitled

to the righteousness through grace of the promise, for God will keep his word ; and becoming entitled to the righteousness, they receive then, as a matter of justice to Christ and mercy to them, all the consequences of that righteousness, even deliverance from the punishment which was due to them because of the sins which Christ expiated, and the rewards due to those good works which they could not do, but which Christ did for them.

He says, also, " God *imputes* this righteousness." By which is meant that God reckons or accounts to the believer the righteousness of Christ as his own. For this is the proper and the scriptural sense of *impute*. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity," or does not charge with iniquity (Ps. xxxii. 2), which the apostle declares (Rom. iv. 6) to be the imputation of "righteousness without works," or the imputation of a righteousness which he had not wrought out for himself; for in a verse a little before he had said (4, 5) : " Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt ; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted (the same Greek word, λογίζομαι) for righteousness."

Understand, if you please, precisely what we mean here. God, by imputing the righteousness of Christ to the believer, does not make the righteousness of Christ the personal righteousness of the believer. That is impossible. The personal acts or qualities of one cannot by any process be made the personal acts or qualities of another. The very idea is absurd. But in imputing the righteousness of Christ to him, God gives to the believer the legal consequences of Christ's righteousness ;

he has the benefit of it as much as if it were his own. He is freed from the penalties of the law because Christ has borne them in his stead. He receives the rewards of Christ's obedience as if he had obeyed himself.

This, then, is the reason why the believer, though himself a sinner, is righteous in the sight of God. It is because God grants and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ.

It is possible that some may object to this merciful arrangement of God in accepting a vicarious or substituted satisfaction, because, in the *first* place, the law requiring righteousness from all, the righteousness of one cannot be the righteousness of many; and in the *second* place, the law requiring personal obedience, no vicarious or substituted obedience can in any way be accepted. Now we might answer such objections by the express declaration of the apostle, that "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). Where God justifieth, who shall condemn? But we ask the objector to consider both the *dignity of the substitute*, Christ Jesus, and *the end of the sanctions* added to the law.

The *substitute* is the man Jesus, in whom *God the Son was incarnate*. The merit, therefore, of his righteousness, both in expiation and obedience, is infinite, and can, therefore, cover the defects and sins of as many sinners such as we are as he chooses to give the benefits of his righteousness unto.

The *end of sanctions to a law* (that is, penalties and rewards) is to maintain its authority over the subject. And we ask, by what method could God declare his determination to vindicate the honor of his law in its forbidding of sin better than by refusing to pardon any

sinner before he had exacted from his son Jesus Christ the full penalty due the sinner for sin? Or in what manner could he testify his appreciation of righteousness so fully as by causing his own son to become incarnate that he might honor the law upon earth, and then bestowing the unspeakably rich reward of eternal life upon his people for that righteousness' sake?

We grant that in human law such substitution could **not** be admitted, though something of the kind (yet **not** in strict justice) has occurred. But there can be **no** parallel between the human law and the divine. **T**he human law ought to be but a transcript of the **d**ivine, and therefore the human judge has no alternative **b**ut to execute it strictly. God is the author of his **o**wn law, and the sovereign offended. He, therefore, *has* the right to justify and pardon a transgressor in **s**uch a way as he is satisfied that his authority receives **n**o detriment.

Besides, the thing is impossible among men; for **w**here could such a substitute as Jesus be found? **W**here all are subjects, the law requires the obedience of all; and, therefore, no one could so abstract himself from his own duty as to prepare a supererogatory righteousness, which might be imputed to the benefit of another. The Son of God obeyed for us a law to which he was not himself subject, and therefore he has a right to bestow the rewards of his righteousness upon whom he will.

The *manner* in which the sinner becomes righteous in Christ.

It is by *faith*; * as the instructor says, "I cannot receive or apply the same to myself in any other way."

* For Faith, see Seventh Lord's Day.

I need not stay to cite proofs from Scripture of the necessity of faith in order to our justification and salvation. The whole tenor of the book shows that he only who believeth can be saved; and this very righteousness is called “the righteousness which is of faith” (Rom. x. 6), or “by faith” (Heb. xi. 7).

But it will readily be seen that even the scheme of salvation by the imputed righteousness of Christ cannot be reconciled to the holiness of God, unless the cheerful and unqualified *submission* of the sinner, who is pardoned, to the justice and excellence of the law be secured, and also his *reformation* from sin unto holiness. This is done by requiring faith from him.

1. His *submission*; for by accepting Christ’s work in his behalf he not only submits to be saved in the way which God appoints, but he acknowledges that he ought to have rendered the righteous obedience which Christ has rendered for him, and deserved to have suffered the penalties which Christ suffered for him. Nay, he rejoices that he has an opportunity of fully honoring the law of God, which he loves, by presenting through his faith the perfect expiation and obedience of Christ. It is his highest satisfaction to believe not only that he is pardoned and accepted of God, but that it is in such a way as reflects the greatest glory upon God and his law, while it humbles himself as utterly destitute of merit, and saved by grace alone.

2. His *reformation* is secured because the proper effect, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is to purify the heart, to work by love, and to overcome the world. So that it is certain that when God justifies he sanctifies, because he justifies only those who believe. Indeed, faith is itself a part, as well as the instrument of sanc-

tification, for no one can truly believe in Christ without being, in the very act of faith, turned from sin unto God. It is, therefore, most false to assert, as some errorists do, that the doctrine of justification by faith encourages or tolerates licentiousness of life. Scripture, experience, even reason show that the very reverse is the case, and that the requisition of faith, in order to salvation, is the very best means of securing the hearty repentance and obedience of the sinner. But upon this we shall have occasion to discourse more at large in our exposition of the next Lord's Day.

We must, however, be careful to remember that there is no merit of any kind in faith itself. The only merit which justifies the believer is that of Christ, as the Catechism says: "Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith, but only because the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God." No merit of ours can be mingled with his. Nor can there be any merit proper in merely believing. Faith is necessary to our justification, because, in order to the righteousness of Christ being applied to us, it must be accepted; and as the Catechism says: "I cannot receive and apply the same to myself in any other way than by faith only." It may be necessary to the pardon of a rebel that he kneel and stretch forth his hand to receive the certificate of it from his sovereign; but there is no merit in either the posture or the act. So there is no merit in our humbly and gratefully accepting the pardon of God in Christ. The apostle does, indeed, speak of "faith" being "counted" or "imputed for righteousness"; but then he means not the faith itself, but the object of it, the righteousness which is of God. For if

he means otherwise, he overthrows the main doctrine which he would establish, that we are saved by no merit of our own, but only by the merit of Jesus Christ.

Thus, my brethren, you have before you the glorious and most comforting doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

It teaches us that

1. Salvation is provided for the lost and ruined sinner.

However sinful we may have been, still are, and feel that we shall yet be, because of the corruption within us, we ought not to despair of mercy, seeing that God offers pardon and favor to us through Christ his Son. We are in most awful peril if we be not saved through Christ, because God offering to us mercy declares us to be lost and undone in ourselves ; yes, so utterly lost and undone that we can be saved only by the infinite merit of the Son of God.

But this salvation is certainly ours, if with true and penitent hearts we simply accept the offer made to us in the gospel, and rely only upon the merits of Jesus Christ, our very faith being the evidence of our pardon and favor with God.

2. The salvation is all of grace.

Grace contrived the plan ; for God was not constrained, except by his infinite mercy, to save sinners who have so richly deserved his wrath.

Grace provides the righteousness necessary for the salvation of the sinner, and which none but God incarnate could have wrought out in our stead.

Grace bestows the salvation upon the sinner, because the faith by which he receives the benefits of Christ's righteousness is wrought in him by the power of the Holy Ghost.

3. The salvation demands our entire submission to God in Christ.

We must abjure all trust in our own merit, and accept it only as a free gift of God's mercy.

We must penitently acknowledge our sins which needed such an expiation, and rejoice in the honor done to the divine law by the obedience of Christ in our stead.

We must receive with the pardon the grace of the Holy Ghost, that we may live to the glory and for the cause of him who saves none from hell whom he does not save from sin.

Christians, give all glory to God, who saves from such condemnation ; who promises so blessed an eternal life ; and who saves us from hell, and makes us heirs of heaven at such infinite cost, and by such infinite power.

Oh, the misery of those who are out of Christ ! They are condemned already. They add to their sin the guilt of despising the mercy of God, the righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the Holy Ghost. They have no true hope of entering heaven, but, except they repent, must go away into everlasting punishment.

LECTURE XXX.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DEFENDED;

OR,

THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

TWENTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH DEFENDED; OR,
THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS.

QUEST. LXII. *But why cannot our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?*

ANS. Because that the righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law; and, also, that our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

QUEST. LXIII. *What do not our works merit, which yet God will reward in this and a future life?*

ANS. The reward is not of merit but of grace.

QUEST. LXIV. *But doth not this doctrine make men careless and profane?*

ANS. By no means; for it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

THE doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH alone, as taught in the last lesson of our Catechism and in the Confessions of all the Reformed churches, has been vehemently objected to. It offends the pride of men by declaring that they are, not only destitute, but incapable of merit in the sight of God, and that, therefore, they cannot be saved except through his free and sovereign mercy. Besides, God, in his word and providence, has established a vital connection between holiness and happiness, so that his favor is ever the reward of righteousness. This is the eternal rule of his government, emanating from his perfect justice and the entire harmony of his perfect attributes. The great purpose of Christianity is to restore the sinner to righteousness, and fit him by a radical reformation for eternal blessedness in the presence of God; and the whole

doctrine of the gospel is given to show that God is not merely merciful, but just, in the salvation of him which believeth in Jesus.

We are not, therefore, willing to suppose that it is only a cavilling, or even a self-righteous spirit, which requires demonstration of the consistency between these undoubted truths and salvation by faith alone. There may be an honest, though not an excusable, misunderstanding of the doctrine which it is our duty to sympathize with, and, so far as we can, correct. What is more natural than to ask, —

How is it that the gospel requires good works from us, and yet they make no part of our justification with God?

How is it, that the rewards of God's favor in this life, but especially in the life to come, are promised to those who do good works, and yet those works are without merit in God's sight?

Or, how can the promise of salvation to simple faith in Jesus Christ fail to encourage men in a careless and presumptuous way of life?

These questions ought to be answered. It ought to be shown that so important an article of our creed is consistent with itself and every part of the word of God. To do this, is the object of the lesson for to-day, and of our present discourse. Thus,

The answer to our 62d Question declares, that

Our good works cannot be a part of our righteousness before God.

The answer to our 63d Question, that

The rewards promised to good works are not because of merit in themselves, but of the grace of God. And the answer to the 64th Question, that

It is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works.

The *first* shows why good works are not insisted upon as a method of salvation.

The *second*, how our good works receive reward, though they have no merit in themselves.

And the *third*, what the genuine effect of faith in Christ is upon the heart and life of the believer.

We shall, by God's help, attempt to discuss the three several propositions as they are laid before us in the lesson.

FIRST: *Good works cannot be a part of our righteousness before God.*

This may be proved at once by the *assertion* of God, **that** "by the deeds of the law (and there are no good **works** which the law does not require) there shall no **flesh** be justified in his sight." What God declares **impossible** cannot be.

It may be proved by the *fact* that God has provided in Christ an infinite righteousness for our justification, **which** would be manifestly unnecessary and superfluous if our own obedience could have availed in any way to save us. As the apostle says, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21).

And it may be proved by the *extent* of *the salvation*, which secures to the believer, though a sinner, a higher blessedness than was granted to man in innocence, and therefore, being out of all proportion to any supposable merit of ours, can only be accounted for by the infinite merit of Christ, the purchaser, and the principle of the gospel, that "where sin abounded, grace should much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). But let us add

to these the conclusive argument of our instructor in the answer to the 62d Question, which is that

We have not, and cannot have, any good works, properly so called, to present before God.

“The righteousness which can be approved of before the tribunal of God must be absolutely perfect, and in all respects conformable to the divine law; and . . . our best works in this life are all imperfect, and defiled with sin.”

When we compare men with each other, it is not to be denied that we may find some bright contrasts to prevailing selfishness and wrong, yet it is from the prevalence of selfishness and wrong that most of what is accounted good in men has its seeming goodness. Among a nation habitually drunkards, one who drank to intoxication only several times a year, as the virtuous men of Athens at the feasts of Bacchus, would be considered a miracle of temperance, but among a nation habitually temperate, a single fit of drunkenness would stamp disgrace on the same person. In Christian countries it is most infamous for a man to treat with contempt and cruelty the wife of his bosom; in Hindoostan the reverse would be extraordinary. Cyrus, in refraining from the dishonor of his beautiful captive, won immortal praise, not because such an abuse of power would not have been in the last degree unmanly, but that such abuse was then universal. These are strong instances, but serve to show what false judgments may be formed from delusive circumstances. A man is liberal in his kindness to the poor, and he gets great credit for charitableness. But is not liberal kindness to the poor a duty binding upon all? Whence then such praise? Few are so unchar-

itable. Another pays debts, from which the letter of human law, but not equity, sets him free, and he is lauded for integrity. Is it not the duty of all men to pay what they really owe? Yes, but few are so honest. Another is distinguished for candor. Is not truth a universal duty? Alas! few are sincere. But who is there perfectly candid, perfectly honest, perfectly benevolent, perfectly pure? Where is there a character perfectly free from blemish? In a world of righteousness like heaven, the best patterns of what we here call human goodness would be strange deformities, and especially so were their inner motives and desires as apparent as their outward conduct.

But God tries us by no rule so partial and shifting as human opinion. He brings us to the test of his holy law. That law requires all righteousness. It is not satisfied with an outward compliance, beyond which human authority cannot penetrate, but searches like his omniscient eye into the thoughts and intents of the heart. The obedience he insists upon is a perfect obedience, an entire conformity to all his precepts. Thus the apostle Paul says (Gal. iii. 10), quoting from Deuteronomy (xxvii. 26), "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." The apostle James goes farther (ii. 10), and declares that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all"; because he is a rebel against the authority of the law. It matters not what obedience we may otherwise or at other times perform, a single act of transgression in thought, word, or deed not only impairs our obedience, but brings us under the penalty of the curse. This is the fact, indeed, with regard to human

law. No one, convicted of a single theft or murder, is freed from punishment, because he did not steal ten purses, or murder ten men. It was his duty to refrain from stealing anything, or wounding any one. No previous or subsequent good conduct can expiate in the eye of justice any one act of crime. The law requires entire innocence. It is true, a generally good character may palliate, but never in strictness can atone for any offence. Repentance is not expiation, because all our time is demanded for perfect obedience.

Now, can we render such entire, perfect, constant obedience? Is there any one of our good works in its motive pure and unmingled with sin? Will all our conduct stand such a scrutiny? Is there any man that liveth and sinneth not? The word of God says No, and conscience echoes the negative. There is no one who has loved God with his whole heart, mind, and strength. There is no one who has loved his neighbor as himself. If one were to make a boast of such perfection, men would hoot at him for a hypocrite, and fear him as an arrant knave, who sought a confidence he would be sure to violate.

There is no hope from our own righteousness. We have not, and we cannot have, any good works, properly so called, to present before God. Our best works are too imperfect to deserve reward, and our actual sins positively condemn us.

But it may be said, that, if we sincerely endeavor to do the very best in our power, God will surely pardon the sins of our infirmities, and accept our service, imperfect as it may be. The justice of God warrants no such expectation. He says unequivocally, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If he be so forgiving and

tolerant, the reason must lie in his mercy; and that would be salvation by grace, not of works. God is merciful, and in his mercy does pardon the sins and accept the services, though unworthy, of all who truly humble themselves to accept his grace. But he is merciful only in Christ, and for Christ's sake only he pardons and accepts the unworthy. If we seek salvation there, we shall certainly find it; but we cannot deserve it, and that is what we intended to prove.

SECONDLY: *The rewards promised to our good works are not because of merit in them, but of the grace of God.*

Rewards are certainly promised to the good works of God's people in this life, and especially in the life to come. The texts of Scripture to prove this are so numerous and familiar, that we scarcely need to recite any. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of one of Christ's disciples, shall not lose its reward (Matt. x. 42).

Good works are, indeed, essential to a warranted hope of heaven, as is clearly shown by our Lord in his parable of the builders (Matt. vii. 21–27), where the man who heard Christ's sayings and did them not is likened to one who built his house upon the sand, and to whom the Lord will say, "I never knew thee;" and in his description of the judgment (Matt. xxv. 31–46), where he declares that none but those who have done good to their fellow-men in trouble, shall be received into life eternal.

The good works of Christ's people follow them to heaven, and there determine the degree of glory which each believer shall receive. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their

works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). The precedence given in heaven to those who were faithful in great tribulations (vii. 14), and the spirit of the Scriptures throughout, show that in proportion to their fidelity shall be the reward of the redeemed, where there are different degrees of blessedness, as one star differeth from another star in glory, though all are bright.

Nay, we are permitted, in imitation of our Master, who, "for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 1, 2), to have "respect" as Moses had (xi. 26) "to the recompense of reward," and to believe, as the apostle assures us, that God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love. We are justified and encouraged in a noble ambition not to be the least in the kingdom of God, but to "lay up for ourselves treasures where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal" (Matt. vi. 20); and to secure a "great reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 12).

But all this value is given to our good works only in consequence of the grace of God in Christ.

1. It is this grace which pardons and delivers us from our sins, which otherwise would condemn and destroy us, notwithstanding all our efforts to do well; for, certainly, until we be delivered from guilt in the past, we can do nothing to merit favor.

2. It is this grace which covers and pardons all the defects which, in despite of all our efforts, will cling to our best attempts at service. The works of the believer are washed in Christ's blood, and adorned by his merits, and presented by his intercession. It is not because they are worthy, or that the worker is worthy, but because they are laid upon the altar Christ Jesus, that

they are both acceptable to God. For consider, my friends, the greatness of reward promised. Is it possible that the best righteousness a man could accomplish during the longest life on earth can deserve such eternal and unspeakably glorious wages as are given to the servants of Christ in heaven? No; nothing less than the righteousness of Christ could deserve a reward so vast; and it is because that righteousness is reckoned unto the believer, and his works are accepted through that righteousness, he receives the promises and the fulfilment of them. And

3. It is this grace which inclined the believer, once in "darkness," (Ephes. v. 8,) and "alienated from the life of God through ignorance" (iv. 18) to good works. But for sovereign grace he had remained dead "in trespasses and sins" (ii. 1). And having inclined him, it is the same grace which enables him to do good works. For, says the Saviour, "without me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5); and the apostle exhorts us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

Since, then, it is grace that delivers us from condemnation, thus giving us the opportunity of doing good works, and grace which presents our good works, imperfect in themselves, but covered with Christ's merits, which grace had provided; nay, since it is grace which inclines and enables us to do any good work, surely, the reward of our good works is not of their merit, but of grace alone.

THIRDLY: *It is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works.*

"It is impossible," says our instructor, "that those

who are implanted into Christ by a true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness."

This will readily be seen, if we consider

1. In whom the Christian believes. It is in Christ the Saviour from sin, who delivers from the necessary consequence of sin, which is misery, not only by expiating past sin, but by saving his people from sin itself. Thus the father of the Baptist, in his thanksgiving, says of God in Christ: "He grants unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, (*i. e.* our sins,) might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life" (Luke i. 74, 75). If, then, the great end and work of the Saviour be to make us obedient and holy, it is impossible that any one can truly believe in him and embrace him as a Saviour, who is not truly penitent, heartily desirous of forsaking all sins, and of living according to all the commandments of God. Consider

2. To whom faith unites the Christian.

By faith he is vitally united to Christ, as members of his body, he being the divine head (Ephes. v. 30); as branches to the stem, he being the living vine (John xv. 1-5); as living stones in God's spiritual house, he being the chief corner-stone (Ephes. ii. 20; 1 Peter ii. 5). Now, as the foundation gives strength and sustenance to the building, as the stem sheds life and fruitfulness through the branches engrafted into it, as the members of the body are vitally united to the head, directed by it and inspired from it, so all who truly believe in Jesus are animated by a life superior to their own, even the Spirit of Christ, made fruitful by an energy superior to their own, even the grace of the Spirit, and sustained by a power superior to their

own, even the strength of God ; so it is impossible but that they will be animated, moved, and enabled to do good works. The absence of such, the proper effect, proves the absence of true faith, the cause. Consider

3. Of whom the Christian learns by faith.

It is of God in Christ, to whom all the prophets and the law bear witness. The true believer in Christ, therefore, believes in all the truth of God, as taught in the Scriptures. All the *doctrines*, all the *precepts*, all the *promises*.

He believes in the infinitely glorious and holy attributes of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thus recognizes himself to be the responsible creature of the omnipotent, all-seeing, and just and good God. He carries this thought with him, and lives and moves and has his being in God.

He believes in the purity, exceeding breadth, and justice of the divine law ; and thus is convinced of his sin, its enormity, and his imminent peril of eternal death, should he not be pardoned and delivered from his sins, but continue a wilful transgressor and rebellious creature.

He believes in the riches of God's grace by Jesus Christ ; the infinite mercy, which proposed to save sinners ; the infinite mercy which sent the Son, of the Son who came, and of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified the Son incarnate as the Saviour ; the infinite merit of that righteousness which the Son wrought for the salvation of sinners ; and the infinite grace of the Holy Ghost, by which that righteousness is applied to and the salvation accomplished for and in the believer ; and he believes in the infinite glory and blessedness of that

life eternal, which is promised, from the Father by the Son and through the Spirit, to all who believe.

Now, my hearers, you cannot fail to perceive that such faith in Christ establishes in the soul of the believer, to incline and maintain him in good works, the three strongest principles of which our nature is capable : *fear, hope, and love.*

How will one, who believes in the awful holiness and terrible justice of God, dare knowingly to persevere in the commission of wrong or the neglect of right ? What can restrain irregular desire and passion if an habitual sense of the divine presence and scrutiny do not ?

And when faith shows in strong contrast to the cares and pleasures and gains of this passing life the bright eternity of rest and joy and glory which awaits God's true and zealous servants, when she points to the increased richness of their reward who have been more true and faithful, will not the *hope* of that heaven and its distinction be as an anchor to the soul of the tempted, a solace to the sad, and a cheerful argument to endure patiently, and work steadfastly, even to the end ?

But above all, when the believer thinks of all the love of God in Christ to his soul, his atonement, his intercession, his power, and his long-suffering, — when he remembers Jesus in the manger, in the desert, in Gethsemane, on the cross, and then looks up to him upon his throne, — when he reads the precious promises bought by his Master's blood, and secured by his Master's Spirit, — will not his sinful, selfish thoughts give way before a gushing tide of *love* for Christ and God in Christ ? Can he choose but live for his cause who died

and rose again that he might give eternal life to as many as would receive him?

Nay, my brethren, so vital is the connection between true faith and good works, that faith is the great instrument by which the Holy Spirit sanctifies the heart of the Christian. It is, in fact, itself a part of the sanctification, and the good works which it produces, the beginning and progress of the very salvation which Christ has promised to the believer.

Thus we argue that it is an essential property of saving faith to bring forth fruits of thankfulness in good works. And in this we see the harmony of the apostles Paul and James, when the one says, "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28); and the other, "that by works man is justified and not by faith only" (James ii. 24), because, as James says (17, v.), "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone;" and (26, v.) "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The true faith which engrafts a sinner into Christ is ever fruitful in good works; that seeming faith which does not produce such sanctifying consequences is not saving faith any more than a dead body is a man.

It is true, faith does not at once perfectly sanctify the repentant sinner. That is not the order of God's grace. But the work is begun with faith, and faith maintains a fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil, until at last it gains a consummate victory.

Let us learn from the whole subject,

1. Humility.

Pride in good works, or self-righteousness, is most inconsistent with a Christian temper; because all that

makes a difference in light or practice between one sinner and another is of grace, and because when the best Christian compares his best works with the only true standard, the law of God, he must find them to be in themselves utterly unworthy to appear before his Judge. Hence the best Christians are always the most humble, and prove it by being the most charitable in the judgment of others. It was not the pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, whom God justified; but the publican, who cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Take heed," my brethren, "and beware of the leaven of the pharisees."

2. Encouragement.

The requirements of the divine law are very great, and the duties of a Christian life very difficult. When in our weakness we contemplate them, we are afraid and say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" "Who can be saved?" How shall we dare bring before God such a poor and imperfect service as the best we can render must be? Yet, my brethren, poor as our best service may be, it can be made better by divine grace. That "grace is sufficient for us"; and if we offer it unto God by faith in Christ Jesus, his righteousness can cover every defect and make meanness, glory; and poverty, abounding riches; while his blood washes away every stain. Oh, what a blessedness to lay our unworthy deeds of service upon the altar of Christ's worth, and see them transmuted into precious beauty, acceptable and welcome to God his Father; and to know that not one kind act, or word, or thought, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, shall ever be lost, but will meet us in heaven, and be our joy and reward and decoration forever among the angels of God! So the best be-

liever is ever the most zealous worker in good to God's cause and his fellow-men.

3. Caution.

If there be no salvation without true faith, and no true faith without good works, it is wise in us most carefully to examine ourselves, whether we have this faith or not. Do we account ourselves orthodox and strong in faith? We are deceiving ourselves, except we be at the same time earnest lovers of God and man, zealous in their service, and ready to devote all we have for their sakes. The three worst signs in a professing Christian are pride, sloth, and covetousness. I know not which is the worst, for they grow like the trefoil on one stem. But this is certain, covetousness is the least easily cured.

But, at the same time, let no one condemn themselves as wanting in true faith because they are not satisfied with the degree of love and zeal they have. It is faith which shows us our defects; and if we be truly sorry for them and make hearty endeavors to live according to the commandments of God, we may be sure that God accepts us in Jesus Christ, because such desires and efforts are the fruit of faith alone. Faith in Christ's cross is nothing except we follow him; nor can we follow him except we have faith in his cross; so that a true following of Christ proves a true faith in Christ.

Which faith, fruitful in good works, may God grant to us all for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

LECTURE XX XI:

**FAITH FROM THE HOLY GHOST THROUGH THE
WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS.**

TWENTY-FIFTH LORD'S DAY.

FAITH FROM THE HOLY GHOST THROUGH THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENTS.

QUEST. LXV. *Since, then, we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits by faith only, whence does this faith proceed?*

ANS. From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments.

QUEST. LXVI. *What are the sacraments?*

ANS. The *sacraments* are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promises of the gospel; viz: that he grants us freely the remission of sin, and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.

QUEST. LXVII. *Are both word and sacraments there ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground of our salvation?*

ANS. Yes, indeed; for the Holy Ghost teaches us in the gospel, and assures us by the sacraments, that the whole of our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ which he offered for us on the cross.

QUEST. LXVIII. *How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the New Covenant, or Testament?*

ANS. Two; viz: holy baptism and the holy supper.

IF, as the Scriptures plainly teach, our salvation be wholly of grace, all the processes and means by which it is accomplished must also be of grace, especially faith, by which we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits. Thus the apostle says (Ephes. ii. 8), “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” The whole work of salvation through faith is of grace; and, consequently, the faith itself is the gift of God. For, as **faith** is the act of a regenerate soul, and a faculty so

superior to our fallen nature as to overcome its sinful tendency, it cannot be exercised by a sinner, except he has it from the grace of God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Christ, by his spirit, is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. xii. 2).

But this dependence upon grace does not render our own efforts to attain salvation unnecessary. On the contrary, God the Holy Ghost works by means adapted to our natures, which means are part of his gracious plan, according to whose justified mercy he offers us salvation; and it is only as we use those means that we can hope for him "to work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." These means being appointed by God as those in the proper use of which he is willing to bless us, it is disobedience on our part not to use them zealously, and unbelief not to expect through them the blessings he has promised.

Our instructor, therefore, while he directs us to the Holy Ghost as the energetic cause of faith, directs us also to those means by our use of which he works and confirms faith in our hearts.

This divides our lesson for to-day under two heads: FIRST: *The Source of Faith.* "The Holy Ghost." SECONDLY: *The Means of Faith.* "The preaching of the gospel," and "the use of the sacraments."

FIRST: *The Holy Ghost is the source of faith.*

In answer to the question, "Whence doth this faith (by which we are made partakers of Christ and all his benefits) proceed?" our instructor says: "From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

Here are three things to be marked : 1. Faith comes from the Holy Ghost. 2. It is wrought in the heart. 3. By the use of certain means.

1. Faith comes from the Holy Ghost.

The Master, in opening the gospel to Nicodemus, asserts first, the necessity of our being born again, and then, of faith in Christ : “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ; ” “ as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” He gives the reason for this order : “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” No man in his natural state can see or enter into the spiritual things of the kingdom of God. He must have a new spiritual life before he can discern and apprehend the doctrine of Christ ; as the apostle argues (1 Cor. ii. 14), “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” We cannot believe the truths of the gospel until we know them.

God so loved the world as to give his Son for our salvation ; the Son has given himself ; and the Holy Ghost has his office in the saving work, which is the application of Christ’s righteousness to the sinner, and this the Divine Sanctifier does by enabling the sinner to believe in Christ, for “ whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The grace of the Holy Ghost is declared, throughout the New Testament, to be given by the Father in answer to the prayers of the Son, and in reward of his righteousness. “ When the Comforter is come, whom I

will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," said the Saviour (John xv. 26); and the apostle Peter at the Pentecost, "Therefore being (*i. e.* Christ) at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye both see and hear" (Acts ii. 33). Thus faith is itself a consequence of the righteousness of Christ; and we are as dependent upon the Holy Ghost for faith as we are upon the Son for atonement, and upon the Father for pardon.

2. The Holy Ghost works faith in the heart of the sinner.

Heart is here used, in the Scriptural sense, for the moral faculties of man. It is the renewed man that believes. The Holy Ghost does not believe for him, but works faith in him, because faith is a personal assent to truth, which man must give for himself.

Neither is faith an impulse, instinct, or involuntary motion, but the free, intelligent exercise of a rational agent, who believes because he knows what is truth upon sufficient testimony, the testimony of God. It is wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, not against the will, or contrary to the laws of mind, but strictly in accordance with our rational nature. There is, indeed, a new life shed through the faculties, freeing them from the bondage of sense, and inspiring them with energy to perceive the truth; yet faith is the result of conviction and the persuasion of the understanding, with the choice of the heart. Hence the apostle says, "*We persuade men*" (2 Cor. v. 11), the Saviour declares that the Holy Ghost *convince*s (reproves, our translation has it) (John xvi. 8), and the apostle again sets

forth the whole process thus : " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ " (2 Cor. iv. 6).

The work of the Holy Ghost is not the less sovereign because it is he who " opens " (Ps. cxix. 18) and " enlightens " (Ephes. i. 18) the understanding, without which we could not see or know what is truth. Still, faith is the gift of God by the grace of the Holy Ghost, though the exercise of it is the act of the soul.

3. This faith is wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost through certain means.

Though we cannot doubt that there is an immediate work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, we are taught that this new life is given through the truth, as man in the beginning was created by the word of God. Thus we are said to be " born of the word of God " (1 Pet. i. 23), to be " begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ " (1 Pet. i. 3), which is the great confirmatory fact of the gospel. The word of God is " the sword of the Spirit " (Ephes. vi. 17), and the gospel is sent to every creature. " Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God " (Rom. x. 14-17), for how can we believe in him of whom we have not heard? We have no reason to expect the grace of the Holy Ghost except through the truth.

This brings us to consider,

SECONDLY: *The means of faith.*

" The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

Our instructor makes a distinction between " work-

ing faith" and "confirming" it. The gospel is the testimony which we are to believe, the sacraments are the corroboration or assurance of that testimony to us. In the words of an old divine (good Bishop Jewell): "As princes' seals confirm and warrant their deeds and charters, so do the sacraments witness to our conscience that God's promises are true and shall continue forever. Thus doth God make known his secret purpose to his church: First, he declareth his mercy by his word, then he sealet it and assureth it by his sacraments. In the word we have his promises, in the sacraments we see them." Thus, 1. The gospel is the truth which we are to believe. 2. The sacraments confirm it to us.

1. The gospel is the truth which we are to believe.

When our instructor speaks of the preaching of the gospel, he does not mean only the preaching of his human ministers, though that is a principal means by which he gives the blessing of truth (1 Cor. i. 21); but he properly includes the manifestation of the gospel by the word of God. For the whole Scripture testifies of Christ (Luke xxiv. 25-27). The gospel was preached unto Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law (Gal. iii. 8), and to the antediluvian sinners (1 Pet. iii. 18, 19), and even at the gate of Paradise in the first promise (Gen. iii. 15). The gospel, therefore, is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

We are to receive the Scriptures as the truth of God, because, as none but God can know the will of God, none but God can make his will known to us.

We are to believe all the Scriptures, because God has revealed to us all the truth they contain as necessary to a sufficient knowledge of himself, ourselves, and his will concerning us.

We are to receive in religious faith no testimony but that of God, because no other testimony is a warrant for religious truth ; and our Lord expressly condemns the Pharisees of his time for mingling traditions of men with the commandments of God (Mark vii. 7) ; and the apostle bids us “ beware lest any man spoil us after the traditions of men ” (Col. ii. 8).

We are to believe the word of God heartily, the word of God wholly, and the word of God only, as the true, perfect, and sole rule of Christian faith and practice (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17). We of the Reformed churches allow no other gospel than that which is taught in the holy Scriptures. None are subdued unto God by any other means than the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. None grow in grace but as they grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ set forth by the Scriptures. There is no means of sanctification but the truth of the word of God, as our Saviour prayed, “ Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth ” (John xvii. 17).

2. The sacraments confirm the gospel to our souls.

Here three questions arise, which are severally answered by our instructor : 1. What is a sacrament ? 2. To what end are they appointed ? 3. How many are there ?

1. What is a sacrament ?

“ The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals appointed of God.”

The word *sacrament* is not in the Scriptures, but is a Latin term adopted by the early Christians to signify what in the Greek original is called *a mystery*. *Mystery* is a term used by the Greeks in their false worship to signify *a ceremony teaching or illustrating a religious*

doctrine to the worshipper. Strangers, or ignorant persons, were not admitted to a share in such mysteries, but only those who were devoted to the study and practice of religion. A sacrament, therefore, as translating mystery, meant a ceremony illustrating religious doctrine. There were some particular uses of the word among the Romans, as an oath, a pledge, &c., but the early church gave it the sense which its derivation warrants. Our instructor accurately defines what we as Christians understand by sacraments: "Holy visible signs and seals appointed of God to declare and seal more fully to us the promise of his gospel."

a. A sacrament is a holy *sign*, or a sign having a holy or religious character.

It is an outward, sensible form or ceremony, in which there is a manifest likeness to, or representation of, the grace presented to our faith. Thus, the washing of baptism presents in a lively figure the cleansing of our souls by the grace of Christ; and the provisions of the Lord's supper the nourishment of our souls by the doctrine of Christ and our communion or fellowship with his true body. If there be no such illustrative sign, there is no sacrament.

b. A sacrament is a *seal* confirming the gospel, whose grace it represents.

It is more than a mere sign, for it is an application of grace to every sincere, intelligent partaker of it; as God said of circumcision, which was a sacrament of the Old Testament church: "This is my *covenant* between me and you, and thy seed after thee, Every man-child among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. xvii. 10). A due performance of that rite was, according to the appointment of God, a reception of his own seal to the

truth of his promise ; so, by the appointment of God, do the sacraments of the Christian church assure the grace which they represent to every one who truly receives them. We, by using the sacraments in a belief of his promise, offer our hearts to God ; and he, through the sacraments, seals the grace upon our hearts, not indeed by the outward action, but by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying it.

c. A sacrament is a sign and seal *appointed of God*.

None but God can ordain the method of our religious service, because he only is the object of such service. We have, therefore, no right to use any form or ceremony in his church which he has not ordained. It is the word of Christ commanding us to be “baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” which makes the application of water, in that holy name, to the believer and his seed, a sacrament. It is the word of Christ commanding us to do in remembrance of him, which makes a participation of bread and wine as representatives of his broken body and shed blood, a sacrament. That is no sacrament which has not been expressly instituted by him. In the language of Augustine, as adopted by the protestant doctors : “Join the word of Christ’s institution with the sensible creature (or sign), and thereof is made a sacrament.”

2. To what end are the sacraments appointed ?

“They are,” says our instructor, “appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz : that he grants us freely the remission of sin and life eternal, for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross.”

The thirty-third article of our confession is fuller and yet more explicit : “ We believe that our gracious God, on account of our weakness and infirmities, hath ordained the sacraments for us, thereby to seal unto us his promises, and to be pledges of the good-will and grace of God toward us, and also to nourish and strengthen our faith : which he hath joined to the word of the gospel, the better to present to our senses both that which he signifies to us by his word, and that which he works inwardly in our hearts, thereby assuring and confirming in us the salvation which he imparts to us.”

The purpose of the sacraments is to confirm our faith in the promises of the gospel. This they do, not of themselves, but by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying them to every true partaker of them.

a. They represent to our senses by significant emblems the doctrine of Christ’s grace. Because of our spiritual weakness and ignorance of spiritual things, God has condescended to arrest the attention of our senses themselves by these perceptible signs or emblems of the truth which he addresses to our minds, that so our senses may assist our minds in meditating upon and understanding the truth. We find the necessity of illustrating spiritual things by figures taken from natural things constant, for our very language is framed chiefly to speak of what we perceive outwardly by our senses. Our divine Master and the Holy Ghost, throughout the Scriptures, have regard to our infirmities by explaining “ heavenly things ” by “ earthly ” (John iii. 12). The sacraments are such figures made visible by actual ceremony. Thus the remission of sins and sanctification of the soul by the atonement of Christ, and the power of

the Spirit, is called a washing, a sprinkling, a cleansing. This mercy of God is, therefore, represented to our senses by the application of water, that so our attention may be fixed upon the spiritual truth. The Saviour declares that his doctrine, the word of God by him, is the proper nourishment of the soul, as bread invigorates and wine refreshes the body ; and, therefore, the sacrament of the supper presents to us broken bread and poured-out wine, that so we, as we receive them, may be reminded of our constant dependence upon Christ's work and doctrine and spirit, for our spiritual life, until he comes again to receive us unto himself. The sacraments add nothing to the truth itself, but assist us in understanding it more clearly, and in applying it to ourselves more closely.

b. The sacraments are open exhibitions to others of that covenant by which believers are united with God in Christ, and through Christ with his true body, his church.

Christ has chosen his people to be witnesses for him of his grace. They are to make known his gospel to the world, and to unite with and assist each other for that end. Therefore, he commands them to come out from the world and be separate ; to take up the cross, and follow him ; and to have fellowship one with another. It is necessary, then, that this distinction from the world and this union with each other, as believers and servants of Christ, should be openly professed and exhibited ; that there should be some outward sign of their faith and love, some expressive representation of that which they acknowledge in their hearts. For how shall the world know that there is a church, if it remain invisible ? How shall Christians know that they

have brethren in Christ, if they do not confess themselves? How shall they testify to the faith of Christ, except before men? Thus, in baptism, the believer declares that he dedicates himself, or, so far as a parent can act for his child, his offspring to the service of Christ, upon the washing of whose blood he relies for the remission of sins. In the Lord's supper, he ratifies his promise of fidelity to Christ, and acknowledges a brotherly fellowship with the people of Christ, who surround as one family the holy table, and partake of the same bread and cup, the sensible emblems of Christ's broken body and shed blood, thereby uniting themselves to each other as they are united to their common head. Christians show forth all this to the world by sacraments, illustrating it in a most lively manner; and by so doing they are confirmed in their faith, not only by the representation made, but by the fact that they obey the command of Christ their Lord.

c. The sacraments and pledges of the grace of Christ testifying his spiritual presence with his church until he come.

When God instituted circumcision, he said: "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised." (Genesis xvii. 9, 10.) That is to say, every time the parent, in obedience to the divine command, and reliance upon the divine promise, should circumcise a child, thereby dedicating him to God, God would ratify on his part the covenant made with Abraham for himself and his seed, until the promise of the Saviour should be fulfilled. In like manner God

commanded the Passover to be kept as a perpetual ordinance (Exodus xii. 24), that, being reminded of the deliverance wrought for them out of the hands of the Egyptians, the Israelites might acknowledge and put their trust in God as their constant protector and redeemer. So, every time that the sacraments are administered, does Christ renew and confirm his covenant, setting forth his spiritual presence and power to wash away sin and to keep his people. For although baptism, being the ordinance initiatory to the visible church, may not be administered more than once to the same person, yet are we reminded of our own baptism, and of the grace of Christ signified by it, whenever before the church it is administered to another, while of the Lord's supper we are required often to partake, not only in remembrance of Christ's death, but in hope of his coming and belief of his presence, as we learn from the nature of the ordinance and the words of the apostle Paul: "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). It is the commemoration of his death, with sensible signs of his presence, and until he come. Whoever by faith receives the sacraments, does in so doing receive personally the promise and grace of the Saviour represented in them, and as a member of his church has a confirmation of Christ's grace to the church.

3. How many sacraments are there?

"Two: namely, Holy Baptism, and the Holy Supper."

There is no need of argument to prove this assertion of our instructor, for only baptism and the Lord's supper have the marks and institution by Christ, which we

have shown to characterize a sacrament. So taught the early fathers, as Augustine, Ambrose, and many before them ; for although some of them speak of other religious things sometimes as sacraments, they meant only that they were sacred mysteries, but not sacraments as we have defined them. Even the Papists, who call *confirmation*, *penance*, *extreme unction*, *m matrimony*, and *holy orders*, sacraments, do not, according to their learned authors, consider them as fully sacraments as baptism and the Lord's supper, but eminently sacred things. So Bessarion says, "We read that these two only sacraments were delivered as plainly in the gospel." The entire Protestant church is agreed in receiving these two only as sacraments.

Let us, therefore, learn from the whole subject —

1. Our entire dependence upon the grace of the Holy Ghost for faith, in its beginning, growth, and perfection. It is an essential part of that sanctifying salvation, which God bestows through Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. Neither the word of the gospel which proclaims salvation, nor the sacraments which seal and confirm the word, can avail us anything, except the Holy Ghost communicates with them, and through them, his saving energy.

2. The truth of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments is the sole instrument of our salvation.

It is only by our belief of that word God has promised to sanctify our heart ; and, therefore, no grace is communicated through any ceremony or form, however sacred, not even the sacraments, except we have a believing apprehension of the truth represented by them. The grace of the sacraments is not in the

water, or the bread and wine, which are only external, corporeal signs, but in the truth they present to every soul who obediently receives them.

3. The great purpose of both word and sacraments is to direct us “to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation.”

We are not to rely upon any reading of the word, or participation of the sacraments, or upon any ceremony we perform, or any work that we do, for our salvation; they are only the means which show us the true ground of our faith, the sufficient finished work of Christ. It is a base and heathenish abuse of the means of grace, if we turn them into objects of trust, instead of Christ.

4. Our duty and encouragement to use diligently the means of grace, especially the word of God and the sacraments.

Though we are entirely dependent upon the grace of the Holy Ghost, yet doth God require of us our own efforts to attain his salvation. He has commanded us to search his Scriptures, to be baptized, and to observe the sacramental feast in remembrance of the death of Christ. Through these means, the word in making known his promises, and the sacraments in confirming them, he has promised to answer our prayers for his divine assistance. Our neglect to use the appointed means of blessing, is, therefore, a refusal of the blessing itself; but when we use them, we do, by faith and in obedience to him, open into our souls the channels of his saving grace. His promise is to the believing, and the proof of faith is obedience. To disobey God, in not using the means of grace, is to

shut ourselves out of the promise ; to obey him in these sacred duties, is not, indeed, to merit any favor, but it is to do that in the doing of which he is graciously pleased to confer his favor only for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord, our righteousness and strength.

LECTURE XXXII.

BAPTISM.

No. I.

ITS AUTHORITY AND DESIGN.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S DAYS.

BAPTISM.

I.—ITS AUTHORITY AND DESIGN.

TWENTY-SIXTH LORD'S DAY.

QUEST. LXIX. *How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee ?*

ANS. Thus: that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and Spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away.

QUEST. LXX. *What is it to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ ?*

ANS. It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice on the cross; and, also, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ; so that we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives.

QUEST. LXXI. *Where has Christ promised us that he will as certainly wash us by his blood and Spirit, as we are washed with the water of baptism ?*

ANS. At the institution of baptism, which is thus expressed: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The promise is also repeated, where the Scripture calls baptism, "the washing of regeneration," and "the washing away of sins."

TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S DAY.

QUEST. LXXII. *Is, then, the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself ?*

ANS. Not at all; for the blood of Jesus Christ only, and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin.

QUEST. LXXIII. *Why, then, doth the Holy Ghost call baptism "the washing of regeneration" and "the washing away of sins" ?*

ANS. God speaks thus not without great cause; to wit, not only thereby to teach us, that the filth of the body is purged away by water, so our sins are removed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, but especially that by this divine pledge and sign he may assure us that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins as really as we are externally washed with water.

QUEST. LXXIV. *Are infants also to be baptized ?*

ANS. Yes; for since they, as well as the adult, are included in the covenant and church of God, and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost is promised to them no less than to the adult, they must, therefore, by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be admitted into the Christian church, and be distinguished from the children of infidels; as was done in the old covenant or testament by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant.*

THE lesson before us includes the whole doctrine of Christian baptism, to a somewhat enlarged, though still concise exposition of which our thoughts will now be directed.

It must be remembered throughout our study of the Catechism, that the person questioned is supposed to be a truly regenerate Christian, who has had in his own experience the proof of the divine truths which his answers set forth. This will account for the positive and assured manner of his claiming a personal concern in the several blessings of a Christian life.

For the sake of greater convenience in our analysis and explanation of the matter here treated by the church, let us arrange the whole under the following heads : —

FIRST : *The authority for our use of Christian baptism.* SECONDLY : *The design of Christian baptism.*

* We take these two sections together, because, though divided for the convenience of recitation on successive Lord's Days, and the subject requires more than one discourse, we cannot treat of it properly without referring to the matter contained in both at each stage of the exposition.

THIRDLY : *The mode of its administration.* FOURTHLY : *The subjects to whom it should be administered.*

FIRST : *The authority for our use of Christian baptism.*

Baptism, simply speaking, is *the application of water*, as in the act of washing or cleansing ; *Christian baptism* is *the application of water to a person "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* "I indeed," said John the Baptist, "baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire " (Luke iii. 16). This shows that the significance of baptism lies in the application of the element to the person, not of the person to the element. "Go ye, therefore," said our Lord to his apostles, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost " (Matt. xxviii. 19). This shows that the pronouncing of the words prescribed, at the time of applying the element, is necessary to the sacrament ; indeed, it were else utterly unmeaning. That water is the proper and only element to be used, we learn from many Scriptures, especially from that giving an account of the Ethiopian eunuch, baptizing (Acts viii. 36-38) ; and the question of Peter, the apostle, before baptizing the household of Cornelius : "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? " (Acts x. 47.) The definition we have given may, therefore, suffice until we come to speak more particularly of the mode in which baptism should be administered. The authority for our use of this external baptism, or the propriety of our administering it, is

not questioned by any known portion of such as call themselves Christians, except the Society of Friends ; but, as we derive our warrant for any Christian custom only from the word of God, let us refer to that absolute and infallible oracle.

I. The command of our Lord, the head of his church, cited but a moment since, is positive. He enjoined upon his disciples to baptize, as certainly as he did to teach, all nations. This sacrament, therefore, with the preaching of the gospel, lies at the foundation of the Christian church. Wherever the word of Christ is proclaimed and men are “discipled,” or truly learn and believe the glad tidings, baptism is to be administered.

II. That the ordinance was not temporary, or only for the beginning of the church, is clear from the promise annexed, which shows the duration of the command : “Lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” or the consummation of the present economy (Matt. xxviii. 20). Until all nations shall have been “discipled,” and the Redeemer’s kingdom on earth made complete by the universal triumph of his gospel, his word is to be preached and baptism continued with it. This is farther confirmed by

III. The inspired practice of the primitive church. The administration of baptism was not restricted to the hands of the apostles, but all the authorized preachers of the gospel appear to have baptized also. Thus Philip, first ordained a deacon, but afterwards, as we may suppose, advanced to be an evangelist, since the deacon’s office (purposely distinct from that of those who gave themselves “continually to prayer and the ministry of the word”) was the care of the poor (Acts

vi. 2-4), baptized many in Samaria, the Ethiopian eunuch, and doubtless a multitude of other converts, under his successful ministry (viii. 27-38). Paul was baptized at Damascus (ix. 18) three years before he ever saw a brother apostle (Gal. i. 17, 18); and he afterwards speaks of the Corinthian Christians as having been baptized, although he himself had baptized none of them but Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 13-16); so he says to the Galatian converts and to all Christians: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27), implying that only they who had been baptized had put on Christ; which accords with Christ's own declaration, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16), and the command of the apostle Peter at the Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts ii. 38). This practice of baptizing every person who desired to confess the Christian faith, thus indubitably observed during the apostolic age, was maintained by the whole Christian world, until the preaching of George Fox, about the middle of the seventeenth century; nor has it ever been questioned but by his disciples.*

SECONDLY: *The design of Christian baptism.*

It being the purpose of God in Christ to constitute his church visibly on earth, certain visible, palpable rites, or acted forms, became necessary, by which his

* This statement needs some qualification, if we allow the Valentinians and Manicheans to have been Christians. There was also a Carthaginian woman, Quintilla, who preached that baptism was useless, and who had some followers. The Messalians, a small absurd sect, are thought by some to have rejected baptism, but it is not certain. See *Wall*, Part II. ch. 5.

gracious will concerning his people should be expressed on his part, and recognized on theirs. Such forms, in addition to the sure divine word of prophecy, were extensively provided under the Old Testament, by ordaining which God visibly prefigured the blessings of salvation, and by using which the true Israelite avowed his faith in the implied promises. They were, therefore, manifest seals of his covenant with them and of their covenant with him. The dispensation of the New Testament, or covenant, being eminently spiritual, and the way of salvation fully declared by the work of Christ, as set forth in the evangelical Scriptures, but more especially by the enlarged testimony of the Holy Ghost to our hearts, the rites commemorative of Christ were not required to be so many as those which, now done away by their fulfilment in Christ, had before prefigured him. Nay, though some such forms were necessary, our Lord was careful to teach us that his religion is not in form, but spirit, by ordaining (as has been shown, twenty-fifth Lord's Day) only two, and those of the most simple character.

As, also, the gospel was first preached to the Jews, and the rites of the Old Testament were, though typical, eloquently illustrative of the gospel, our Lord in his condescending wisdom chose for his church such sacramental signs and seals as nearly resembled those of the obsolete dispensation. The two great sacramental types were circumcision and the passover: the first being the introduction of the new-born Israelite, or of the adult proselyte, to the blessings of the external covenant; the second, a personal confirmation of the covenant to and by the circumcised one. Circumcision signified "the putting away of the filth of the flesh"

(1 Pet. iii. 21); but this was also signified by the “divers washings” (Heb. ix. 10), principally sprinkling of water and the blood of sacrifices. The passover, in which the sacrificed lamb, whose sprinkled blood saved the first-born of Israel from the destroying angel, was partaken of as food by the worshippers, typified Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose blood is the salvation of his people from the wrath of God, of which deliverance all who believe in him are partakers, as a family in common; but this redemption was also signified by all Levitical sacrifices of atonement. Thus, circumcision and the passover comprehended in their significance all the rites of the ancient economy, they together having in them the ideas of covenant, cleansing, redemption, and fellowship. The Lord’s supper, as we shall have farther occasion to show, was ordained in the place of the Paschal ceremony; our Lord having first stripped it of all pomp and unnecessary circumstance, according to the simplicity of his gospel, and made it as simple as a household meal, the beautiful sacrament of household love.

Baptism was ordained in the place of circumcision. That was a painful ordinance (Ex. iv. 25, 26), and, therefore, unsuited to the mercy of the gospel. Besides, while signifying the cleansing of the flesh, it had another meaning, rendered obsolete by the coming of Christ: the promise of the Messiah through the propagation of Abraham’s covenanted race. The other consentaneous sign of cleansing, *washing*, or more frequently *sprinkling* (water being commanded in the place of blood, because the sacrifice had ceased), was chosen as the primary sacrament. The idea of covenant was also preserved by this symbolical washing, as

we read that Moses, after the giving of the moral law, “took the blood” “of peace-offerings” “and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words” (Ex. xxiv. 5–8). It is proper for you to mark here, though we shall speak of it again, how very simple and stripped of all other ceremony is the ordinance of baptism according to our Lord’s institution of it, — as simple as the washing or sprinkling with water.

We are now better prepared to see what was the end our Lord proposed in ordaining the sacrament of Christian baptism for the confirmation of our faith ; and, following the order of our catechetical instructor, we shall *first* observe what it is, and *then*, what it is not.

I. The first question may be met by saying that Christian baptism is *a sign, a seal, and a profession* : a *sign*, as it is significant of certain truths ; a *seal*, as it is an assurance of certain benefits ; and a *profession*, as the recipient on his own part makes a profession to the church, and the church by baptizing him makes a profession to him on behalf of God.

1. Christian baptism is a sign, being significant of certain truths.

What these truths are, we gather from the Answers to the 69th and 70th Questions : —

“ *How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is of real advantage to thee?* ”

“ Thus : that Christ appointed this external washing with water, adding thereto this promise, that I am as certainly washed by his blood and spirit from all the pollution of my soul, that is, from all my sins, as I am

washed externally with water, by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away."

"What is it to be washed with the blood and spirit of Christ?"

"It is to receive of God the remission of sins freely, for the sake of Christ's blood, which he shed for us by his sacrifice upon the cross; and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be members of Christ; that we may more and more die unto sin, and lead holy and unblamable lives."

The whole may be summed up as declaring the acceptableness of believing sinners to God the Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. So we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For, although our eternal life comes from the Godhead, each of the persons constituting, in our blessed Trinity, the one God, has his peculiar office, according to the plan of redemption: the Father representing the authority and honor of the Godhead; the Son, as the incarnate mediator, making the atoning provision for the acceptance of his people; and the Holy Ghost, by his almighty energy, applying to the elect the benefits purchased by the Son, and conferred by the Father.

a. Christian baptism signifies the acceptableness of believing sinners to God the Father. Believers in the gospel receive "power (or the prerogative) to become the sons of God" (John i. 12). This adopted sonship is a restoration, though in a higher degree, of the sonship to God which man had before he fell. That relation he lost by sin; consequently, when his sin is expiated, pardoned, or washed away, he is restored to his place in the family of God. Hence, baptism is said to

be, or rather it signifies, [for, strictly, the expression of the apostle Paul (Titus iii. 5) refers to the grace, and not the sacramental sign,] “The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The penitent is introduced to a new life, eternal life, having been begotten and born again by the power of God to be his Son; so he receives the washing to signify the change from the sin which made him offensive, to the righteousness which makes him acceptable, in the sight of God. All the advantages of adoption are promised by the adopting act; so the church says in her baptismal form: “When we are baptized in the name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us that he doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for his children and heirs, and, therefore, will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil, or turn it to our good.”

b. Christian baptism signifies the shedding of Christ's blood in his one sacrifice on the cross for the remission of sins. The life of the sinner, being forfeited to the law, could be redeemed only by the life of his surety or substitute, for the penalty must be satisfied. Hence, Christ died for us; and as, according to the Scripture, the blood is the life (Lev. xvii. 11), the shedding of his blood is put for the offering of his life, that is, for his death. Thus, all the typical sacrifices of atonement were sacrifices of life, for “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22). The blood of the offered victim was, in the great sacrifice of atonement, sprinkled upon the propitiatory or covering of the ark which contained the broken law, “for an atonement,” “because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all

their sins" (Lev. xvi. 16). Where the sacrifice was for an individual, the blood of the victim, poured out upon the altar, was specially sprinkled by the priest on the person of the sinner. Thus baptism brings to mind both the pouring out of Christ's blood before God as a propitiation to the broken law, and the special benefit of that blood to each individual penitent. Guilt (or liability to punishment) is throughout the Scripture considered as defilement; so the taking away of guilt is aptly expressed by washing, to represent which, simple sprinkling was considered, under the Old Testament, sufficient, as the Reformed churches hold it to be under the New. From the sacrificial substitution of Christ for his people flow all the benefits obtained by his representative work; hence, the church in her baptismal form says: "When we are baptized in the name of the Son, the Son sealeth unto us that he doth wash us in his blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of his death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and accounted righteous before God."

c. Christian baptism signifies the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost.

As has been stated, it is the doctrine of Scripture that the blessings of redemption are applied to the soul by the personal agency of the Holy Ghost. Thus the apostle, speaking of the whole church, says: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," *i. e.* the body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 13); again: "Through him (Christ) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). The regeneration, by which the sinner becomes a child of God, is the work of the Spirit: "Except a man be

born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5-7). The washing away of sins with the blood of the cross is by the Holy Spirit. "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). The blood of Christ is the instrument of the washing; the Holy Spirit is the agent, or the washer. The Holy Spirit seals, or marks as set apart or sanctified, to God, those who believe. "In whom (Christ), after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, (or promised Spirit,) which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 13, 14). Besides the washing of remission, by which the guilt of Christ's people is taken away, there is also a washing away by the Spirit of the pollution which sin leaves upon the soul, ordinarily and technically called sanctification. The consequence of this latter cleansing, joined to the regenerating, enlightening, and strengthening influences of the Spirit, is the production and gradual but sure growth of all those graces or virtues of religion which constitute the Christian character, until it is complete in glory; which graces are, therefore, called "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22, 23). All these several operations of the Spirit are signified in baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" fire expressing the intense energy of the Spirit to purify (Luke iii. 16). The baptism of John was (imperfectly) Christian baptism, because it referred to Christ; but it was not Christian baptism complete or in full, for it did not refer to the Holy

Ghost. Hence the apostles and those with them in the chamber of the Pentecost, who, doubtless, had received the preliminary baptism of John, were not baptized again with water, because they had the baptism of the Holy Spirit itself; but, as we read in Acts xix. 1-5, those, who had received John's baptism and not the Holy Ghost, were baptized again. So the apostle Peter said to the mixed multitude: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 38, 39). The promise, in order to receive which they were to be baptized, was that of the Holy Ghost (compare 33d with 16-18): "It shall come to pass in those days that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel ii. 28). A similar promise of the Spirit, as represented in baptism, was given by Isaiah (xliv. 3): "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon their offspring;" and also by Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25-27): "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments and do them." Thus, in the application of the water is the pouring out or sprinkling seen. Hence the church in her baptismal form says: "When we are

baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us by this holy sacrament, that he will dwell in us, and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us that which we have in Christ, namely, the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal."

2. Christian baptism is *a seal*, as it is an assurance of certain benefits. A seal is added and attached to a written deed, as an attestation of the covenant. A sacrament does not reveal the benefits of grace ; that is done by the word ; but it confirms the testimony of the word. A sacrament is not itself a covenant ; that is already made ; but it is a seal or assurance of the covenant (twenty-fifth Lord's Day) ; thus the apostle, speaking of Abraham, says : " He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised " (Rom. iv. 11). The covenant was made with him while yet uncircumcised ; then circumcision was added as a seal or visible assurance. But a seal without a covenant has neither value or meaning ; so, except there be first a covenant with God, baptism, though externally applied, assures nothing. It is a seal only of the righteousness of faith. But when there is faith to apprehend the covenant, then baptism is a sure seal and pledge of the benefits covenanted. Hence the Christian disciple in our Catechism, believing the promise of the gospel covenant, hesitates not to say : " I am as certainly washed by the blood and Spirit of Christ from all pollution of my soul, that is from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water." So, also, in the baptismal form,

the church, *taking for granted faith in the covenant*, says : “ Baptism is a seal and undoubted (rather indubitable) testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God ; ” and in the thanksgiving, after the baptism of the infants of believers, bids us say : “ Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise thee that thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and received us through thy Holy Spirit as members of thy only-begotten Son, and adopted us to be thy children, and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism.” All these enumerated blessings are promised unto faith : if we have faith, baptism seals them unto us ; if we have not faith, we have no right to the baptism, which supposes a previous covenant ; for, in such case, baptism is unmeaning and valueless, as a seal without an instrument or deed.

What baptism seals has been shown in what it signifies ; for the seal and the sign are for the same things.

a. When we are baptized in the name of the Father, it seals to us our adoption by God as his children.

b. When we are baptized in the name of the Son, it seals to us the remission of our sins through his blood.

c. When we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost, it seals to us all the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

3. Christian baptism is a profession, or formal, open declaration of the truths thus signified and sealed.

As the church is visible, so the profession must be visible. Thus,

a. The recipient of baptism openly professes, not only his faith in the covenant of God to him, but his covenant to God, that he will be (1.) a child of God in

all holy obedience ; (2.) a follower of Christ's doctrine and example ; and (3.) a zealous cultivator of the Spirit's grace, without which he is nothing, and can do nothing. In brief, he avows himself to the church, and before the world, to be a Christian. As the church, in her sacramental form, says : " Whereas, in all covenants, there are contained two parts, therefore are we by God, through baptism, admonished of and obliged (*i. e.* put under obligations) unto new obedience : namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength ; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." This is our profession in receiving baptism.

7. The church, on the other hand, as in the place of God, professes unto the person baptized before the world, that he is received among the children of God, the followers of Christ, and the saints of the Holy Ghost, — that is, into the visible company of Christian believers.

Hence baptism has been universally regarded to be the initiatory rite to the Christian church, as circumcision was the rite initiatory to the former covenant.

II. What Christian baptism is not.

This second point of our proposed inquiry may be thought to have been sufficiently met in discussing the first ; but the 72d and 73d Questions, with their Answers, show that our instructor means to rebuke the error of those who consider the outward sacrament of baptism a real washing away of sins and a regeneration by the Holy Ghost ; or (what is nearly the same thing) that the graces of remission and regeneration certainly

accompany the outward sign. That no one may so abuse their souls, or pervert the language of our church, let us consider :

1. That “ the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,” and the grace of the Holy Spirit alone renews the soul. The cleansing and the renewal are both spiritual and internal ; nor can they possibly be effected in the soul by an outward application of water to the body.

2. That the sacrament, being only a sign and a seal, does not confer the blessings, either by itself or by accompanying grace, but supposes the blessings to have been already conferred by a covenant already entered into.

3. That the texts of Scripture usually quoted to sustain these heterodox opinions, are misinterpreted. Thus :

a. The text is cited from the epistle to Titus : “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost ” (iii. 5). Our instructor rightly supposes that baptism, here meant, is referred to only as figuratively signifying, and, to the believer, sealing the grace of the Holy Ghost ; but that the form does not confer the grace, is strongly asserted by the apostle when he says that we are saved only according to the “ mercy ” of God, and “ not by works of righteousness ” (by which the usage of Paul was to designate ceremonial compliances) which we have done or can do.

b. The second text cited is in the address of Ananias to Saul (Acts xxii. 16) : “ Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

By this is meant that he should, in receiving baptism, give open token that he believed his sins to be washed away, and so be confirmed in his faith by the sign and the seal. If the expression be taken as absolutely literal, he was commanded to wash away his own sins by the sacramental waters, — a stretch of interpretation few are willing to take, as our sins are washed away only by the Holy Ghost with the blood of Christ, and as no one washes himself in baptism, but the recipient is washed.

c. Our Lord's words to Nicodemus are sometimes quoted in this connection: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." There are good doubts whether baptism (outward) is here referred to at all; but assuming that it is, there are two births spoken of: of water and of the Spirit; and it by no means follows that he who is born of water is necessarily born of the spirit, or that he who is born of the spirit is necessarily born of water. He must be born of each and of both. It is nowhere said, that he who is born of water has certainly entered the kingdom of God; but it is everywhere asserted, that to be born of the Spirit is to enter the divine kingdom. He who wilfully refuses to enter the kingdom of God upon earth by baptism, may well fear being refused admission to the kingdom above; but he who is truly born of the Spirit, is as truly a child of God and an heir of eternal life. One may be deprived of baptism by uncontrollable circumstances; but if he be born of the Spirit, his "record is on high."

d. One more text: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). This is not asserting that a baptized person is necessarily a believer;

on the contrary, it is added: "he that believeth not shall be damned," *i. e.* whether baptized or not. Faith certainly saves; baptism does not, except it be received in faith.

Let the apostle Peter sum up the matter: "Baptism now doth save us [not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (*or the external cleansing*), but the answer of a good conscience toward God] by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter iii. 21). Reliance upon any external form is going back to the unspiritual, self-righteous superstition of the Jews under the old law; reliance on the grace of the Spirit in the gospel is the saving faith of the New Testament.

May God make us worthy partakers of his Spirit, and keep us faithful to our baptismal obligations! Amen.

LECTURE XXXIII

BAPTISM.

No. II.

THE MODE.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S DAYS.

BAPTISM.

II. — THE MODE.

HAVING, in our former discourse, shown, FIRST: The *authority* for Christian baptism; and, SECONDLY: Its *design*; it now remains for us to consider, THIRDLY: The *mode* of its *administration*; and, FOURTHLY: The *subjects* to whom it should be *administered*.

THIRDLY: *The mode in which Christian baptism should be administered.*

We use the term *mode* here in a large sense, comprising by it everything connected with the administration of the sacrament, not treated under the other heads, as: I. The administrator. II. The circumstances. III. The formula. IV. The element to be used. V. The manner of applying it. In this order, as in our main arrangement, convenience is aimed at rather than a precise succession of thought.

I. The *administrator*, or the person who should officiate in conferring baptism.

The sacrament, being a sign and seal of divine grace, should be received as from the hand of God, represented by the officiating person. It is proper, therefore, that so solemn an act as affixing a seal in the name of God should be performed by no unaccredited agent; and as the ordinance is intended to confirm the

word of God, a belief of which is the qualification for rightly receiving baptism, we easily infer that those who are officially authorized to preach the word are the proper persons to administer the confirming sacrament. So we find the command to baptize joined by the Saviour with the command to preach the gospel, in the great commission. The same persons are directed to do both. The holy apostles were, and their successors in the office of preaching the gospel are, styled by the Holy Ghost "ambassadors for Christ," as though God spake by them (2 Cor. v. 20). They, therefore, have the delegated prerogative of confirming the truth which they are sent to proclaim. Hence, we have no recorded instance of any others administering baptism but authorized preachers of the gospel.

We have seen, also, that baptism is the open sign of admission into the church visible, and, therefore, the reception of the new member should be the act of one who by his office represents the church, viz: its bishop, *i. e.*, according to the language of Scripture, the presiding presbyter.

The question has been much vexed, both before and after the Reformation, whether baptism administered in a case of necessity by a layman, though acknowledged to be irregular, should not be regarded as so far valid that a repetition of the rite would be improper. The extreme — very just reluctance felt by a large majority of Christians to dishonor a sacrament, and the erroneous supposition of many that baptism is necessary to the assurance of salvation — has led the greater part to decide that lay-baptism should not be rejected. Our Reformed church teaches the contrary, both in her confession of faith (Article xxx.) and in her form for ordaining min-

isters of the word, where the office of administering the sacraments is especially ascribed to them. Such was the opinion of the famous Ursinus, the author of our Catechism, as it is of the Westminster confession, and of nearly all the evangelical denominations.

The personal immorality or insincerity of the officiator does not affect the validity of the ordinance, if he be regularly officiating at the time, for the act is official, not personal ; nor does the otherwise heretical character of a church impair their baptism, if it be administered according to the apostolical usage, and with an orthodox belief respecting the divine nature and unity of the three ever-blessed persons named in conferring the sacred seal.

II. The *circumstances*.

Baptism being the sacrament of admission into the visible church, it is meet that it should be administered openly before the assembled church ; that the church may own and the baptized person declare the covenant between them and him. Hence, when the persons interested are not prevented by sickness or other causes (not a false shame, which is unbecoming pride) from attending in the proper place of public worship, the rite should be performed there and at the time of public worship. But if it be performed more privately, there should at least be more than one Christian person present to constitute a church ; and the officiating minister should, if possible, have a ruling elder with him for the same purpose, although, being himself both bishop and presbyter, he may, in extreme cases, act alone.

Every care should be taken that the ordinance be administered with all the reverence due in so solemn a

service, and attempts to make it an occasion of worldly festivity or show discouraged and forbidden.

III. The *formula*, or form of words, to be pronounced in administering the baptism, should be that prescribed by our Lord to the apostles, without omission, addition, or alteration. It were profane presumption to attempt any improvement upon Christ's prescription. But this does not forbid proper explanations, vows or prayers before, or thanksgiving with exhortations afterward, provided nothing be introduced that mars the solemnity of the ordinance or its primitive simplicity. The Reformed churches here explicitly reject signing the subject with the sign of the cross, because it has no apostolical authority ; because the practice is derived from a superstitious communion, who attribute an unscriptural and idolatrous virtue to the use of that sign ; and because, on the unauthorized pretence of increasing the impressiveness of the ceremony, it distracts attention and reliance from the simple baptism with water, as appointed by our Lord.

IV. The *element* to be used.

That this is pure water, has already been sufficiently shown from Scripture ; and so all the Protestant churches use water alone ; but the Papists most profanely and indecorously add oil and spittle and salt, which the Reformed churches protest against as an unseemly and idolatrous practice.

V. The *manner* of applying the water.

On this subject, you are aware, there has been much controversy, and therefore we are required to be explicit. Water may be applied to a person in three ways : by sprinkling, by pouring it upon him, or by plunging him in it. Our church states it to be "the

dipping in or sprinkling with water” ; yet, while it is admitted that baptism by dipping in is valid, the practice of the church is to baptize by sprinkling, as equally valid, and for many reasons far preferable. No candidate for the ordinance is forbidden to be baptized by immersion, or being dipped ; but our ministers generally, if not universally, would decline administering the ordinance in that manner, lest they should encourage an undue scrupulousness on a point which they consider unimportant and contrary to our well-considered, established usage. Nothing need be said of pouring, or effusion, as the principle is contained in the application by sprinkling. Yet, while thus charitable in allowing those who prefer immersion, or dipping, to follow their own method, we are not met with equal consideration, as a large and highly respectable body of Christians deny the validity of any baptism but immersion.

We justify the practice of our church by several arguments : 1. The meaning of the original words which are rendered “ baptize,” or “ baptism,” by the translators of our Bible. 2. The sufficiency of sprinkling to signify the thing intended. 3. The greater convenience, and, therefore, expediency of sprinkling.

1. The meaning of the original words which are rendered “ baptize ” and “ baptism.”

If these words necessarily, and only, mean *immersion*, the question should be yielded by us at once. But such is not their necessary and only meaning. The primitive, or radical sense, we admit, is *immersion* ; but, like many other words in all languages, they came, by a common use of speech, to have other significations as well as that which was the radical, and among them washing, or the use of water for the purpose of cleans-

ing. Thus the evangelist Mark (vii. 1-4) tells us that the Pharisees were scandalized at our Lord's disciples because they did not, according to the tradition of the elders, wash their hands before eating, *i. e.* cleanse them with water. If, however, it be argued that the verb here means immersion, because they would naturally plunge their hands into water, how shall we apply the term throughout the fourth verse? "And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables." Cups may be dipped; so may pots and brazen vessels, if of a small size; but tables, or, more correctly, the couches on which the guests reclined around the table, were altogether too large to be dipped or plunged into water, and it would be difficult to imagine how they could have been cleansed in any other way than by the application of water to them. Besides, the washing there spoken of is clearly not an ordinary washing, such as takes place in every cleanly household, but a ceremonial custom to cleanse from ritual defilement the articles used; and we have seen already that such ceremonial cleansing might be effected, as it was in most cases, by mere sprinkling.

This interpretation is fully confirmed by the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 10-14), where the ceremonial cleanness is said to have "stood only in meats and drinks and divers *washings*, and carnal ordinances." Now, it is notorious that the larger part of those ceremonial "*washings*," or baptisms, consisted of sprinklings, or effusions of water or of blood. The writer is evidently speaking comprehensively of all the lustrations; not the few in which immersion was required, but the many in which sprinkling was sufficient to represent

washing; for he goes on to say: "But Christ, being come a high priest of good things to come . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Certainly, here is a continuation of reference to those of the "divers washings" with blood, which accompanied the entrance of the Levitical high priest to the Holy of Holies, all of which were performed by sprinkling; and the argument goes on: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Now, here we see that not only the term "baptism" includes the "sprinkling" under the law, but that baptism and sprinkling are used interchangeably, particularly when cleansing by the blood of Christ (which is signified in Christian baptism) is spoken of.* If sprinklings under the Old Testament are called baptisms, why may not sprinkling be considered baptism under the New? This is all we contend for, and the passage cited proves it fully. We may, however, add a proof or two more. John the Baptist, or baptizer, says: "I, indeed, baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Now, if the word *baptize* be rendered *immerse* in the former part of the verse, the latter clause should read, "He shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost and in fire," which is not ac-

* The same may be said of the other two instances in verse 19, and verses 24, 25, of same chapter.

according to fact. Christ, as the head of his church, was baptized with the Holy Ghost as he came up from being baptized with water by John; but was it by immersion into the Holy Ghost? On the contrary, the Holy Ghost *descended* in a bodily shape “like a dove (*i. e.* with a fluttering motion like a dove when alighting), and lighting upon him” (Matt. iii. 16); so when he himself baptized his disciples at the Pentecost, we read that, “There *came* a sound *from heaven* as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it (*i. e.* the appearance like fire) sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts ii. 2–4). Here we see that, like their Master, they were baptized, not by being immersed into the Holy Ghost and the fire, but by the Holy Ghost being poured out or descending upon them, and in the form of fire resting upon them. This is in accordance with prophetic language, as the apostle Peter quoted it at the time (from Joel ii. 28–32): “It shall come to pass in those days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.” The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the primary baptism of Christ as an *anointing* (lxi. 1), which we know was done by pouring oil upon the head. If immersion were necessary to baptism, the disciples at the Pentecost were not baptized with the Holy Ghost, for the fire only sat upon them. If it be answered, that the Holy Ghost “filled all the house where they were sitting,” we rejoin that it was the *sound* “as of a rushing mighty wind” that filled the place, not the wind; the visible element of the baptism was the appearance like fire, which did not fill

the place, but only rested in forms like cloven tongues of fire. Supernatural fire was, as you know, the sign or emblem of present divinity ; and the expression “ with the Holy Ghost and with fire ” is a Hebraistic duplication or parallelism to express the same thing, while the purifying grace of the Holy Spirit is also brought into view. If, however, the immersionists insist upon it that the Holy Ghost, like a wind or vapor, filled the house, it does not relieve them from their embarrassment, but increases it ; for to imitate exactly (as they say we should) the mode of this baptism, it were necessary, not simply to immerse the subject, but to pour water upon him until he is completely covered with the element, which I have never heard of their doing.

That baptism (the word) is not necessarily synonymous with immersion, is clear from 1 Cor. x. 1. “ Moreover, brethren,” the apostle there says, “ . . . all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea ; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” As to the cloud, — doubtless the cloud of the divine presence, — all we read in the account of Moses is, that it removed from before the camp of Israel, and stood behind it, between them and the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 19, 20). In so doing we may suppose it to have passed over the host of Israel. In Numbers (x. 34), we are told that it “ was upon them by day,” and (xiv. 14) that it stood “ over them.” Some think that the cloud sent forth rain ; but the conjecture is far-fetched, for it was not a cloud of moisture, being a pillar of fire by night ; nor do the texts, quoted to sustain the idea, bear upon the subject. It was, no doubt, like a thick smoke, hanging over them, or before or behind them like a cloud. But will any

one pretend that the Israelites were lifted up and plunged into it, which the immersionists say is necessary to baptism? On the contrary, even if it enveloped them, must it not have *descended* upon them, which we, in our baptism, make the water do? As “to the sea,” we are expressly told that they went through it dry-shod, wet, at the utmost, merely by a sprinkling of spray from the rolled-back floods. If being wholly under water is necessary to baptism, the Egyptians only were baptized; the Israelites were not. Surely, no immersionist would consider it baptism to pass through a dry reservoir, or the dry bed of a stream which once had been full of water.

Much stress has been laid by immersionists on that passage of the apostle Peter, where he says, referring to the ark of Noah, “wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water: The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us; (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21). The inference is, however, wholly on our side. How did the water save Noah and his family? By literally covering them all over? Certainly not; but by bearing up the ark in which they were, so that the waters did not touch them, except perchance in the descending rain or the dashing spray. The sinners of the old world were so immersed or covered with water, and were drowned in consequence. The truth is, the apostle does not speak of the mode at all, but only of the grace signified by baptism.

This last remark is equally applicable to those passages which speak of Christians as having “put on

Christ ” by baptism (Gal. iii. 27) ; being “ buried with him by baptism into death ” (Rom. vi. 4), and rising with him again (Col. ii. 12). There is more poetry (and not good poetry either) than logic in running a fanciful parallel between going under the water, to come out of it in a moment, and the burial of Christ in a rock, until his resurrection on the third day. Dramatically, death on a cross is but remotely represented by death under water. The scriptural doctrine is, that the believer by faith is united to Christ as his representative, and, therefore, is “ crucified with Christ,” “ risen with Christ,” “ glorified with Christ.” The reception of baptism declares his faith, and seals him with the outward sign of Christ’s people, no matter in what manner the sacramental emblem be applied.

For the same reason we regard as of little importance the precise mode in which baptism was administered by John or the early ministers of Christ, whether by immersion or sprinkling. A mode may have been convenient for them, which is very awkward, and sometimes dangerous, for us. It is enough that we use water sufficiently as a sign. Yet we are far from admitting that baptism was then, at least, always administered by immersion. It is notorious that the Greek prepositions rendered “ *into* ” and “ *out of* ” (the water) may also be rendered *to* and *from*. Yet, even were they confined to the former meaning, it does not prove that the subject was immersed ; as, had they been baptized by sprinkling, it would have been more convenient both for the administrator and the subject to gather up their loose garments from their lower limbs, and putting off their sandals, — the only covering they wore on their feet, — step a little way into the

water, especially when, as was the case with the Jordan, the banks were steep. This is the way in which baptism is represented by some old pictures, and certainly must have been more pleasant in that warm climate than is a plunge through the ice, on a winter's day, in ours. As to the duty of following our Lord into the water, it is a mere play upon words ; for we do not follow our Lord in John's baptism, but in his baptism by the Holy Ghost, which he received after coming up from the water.

Yet, should we grant that John baptized only by immersion, it does not follow that all the Christian baptisms spoken of were administered in the same way.

At the Pentecost three thousand persons were baptized in one day, and that between the third and ninth hours (Acts ii. 15 ; iii. 1). Can it be believed that so many were plunged under water within six hours, even were the Twelve assisted by the Seventy, of which we have no account ? We are told that John baptized "in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John iii. 23). Much water was necessary, say our immersionists, because he baptized by plunging ; but had he only sprinkled them, a little water would have sufficed for never so great a multitude. But was there much water in Jerusalem ? It was tolerably well supplied for ordinary purposes from cisterns and a few pools ; but is it probable that the new sect would have been permitted to defile all the water in the city by dipping in it such a multitude ? or that the multitude, both men and women, were prepared (as our friends on the other side always take care to be) with dry garments and even water-proof boots, for

the officiating minister, and convenient places to change their garments after their plunge? Baptism by sprinkling could have been administered with decent solemnity, but what indecent confusion must have resulted from dipping so many. Is it not strange that we have no account of the place or places where the rite was administered, if the precise mode were so important?

Similar difficulties belong to other instances, as we are not told, on any of the several occasions, where the new converts were or could have been plunged. In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, we know that the only water along his route through the desert of Gaza was the little stream now called *Wel-Hary*, which, though it may have been swollen during the rainy season, must have been, at the time he crossed, too shallow to allow the immersion of a man, to say nothing of the minor, but really awkward, difficulty attending the saturation of his clothes, unless he was dipped naked, a fashion followed by none in these days (Acts viii.). The jailer and his family were baptized in the prison after midnight, and could hardly have been immersed, unless we allow our Baptist friends to put a tank within the walls of a heathen jail, as they do in their convenient churches, for the purpose of baptism. As to their having gone to the river Strymon to baptize them, the distance from the city renders the supposition absurd (Acts xvi. 33). Is it not strange, we ask again, that the immersionist has not been supplied by the Scripture on a point he deems so momentous?

What means Peter's question, when about to baptize the household and friends of Cornelius: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?" (Acts x. 47.) Is he not asking that water should be

brought in for the purpose? Would not an immersionist have said: "Can any man forbid that we should go to the water and baptize them?"

But enough of this. The thing is too puerile for the gravity of a Christian pulpit; and the discussion can be tolerated only because some good people have been strangely led into troubles of conscience on the subject.

2. The sufficiency of sprinkling to signify the thing intended.

For this we have the highest authority in Scripture. Baptism will, I trust, be acknowledged a symbolical washing or cleansing. Such symbolical cleansing was *always*, under the Old Testament, ordered to be performed by sprinkling. I do not quote, because the citations would be innumerable. There is not a single instance of any person being required to be immersed throughout the whole of the older Scriptures, except Naaman, who was neither a Jew nor a proselyte. The priests, before entering upon the special solemnities of the temple, were ordered to wash themselves thoroughly; but that was for personal cleanliness rather than a symbolical purification, else they would have been baptized often in a year. All the ceremonial cleansings were performed in our way. Great stress is laid by some upon the Jewish mode of baptizing proselytes, which was by immersion; but we deny that they had any divine authority for it. The Rabbins cite for the purpose Jacob's direction to his proselyted household: "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments" (Gen. xxxv. 2); and that of Moses to the Israelites, that they should "wash their clothes" (Ex. xix. 10); but neither of these orders the immersion of their bodies. A third

text they quote is one where the people were sprinkled (Ex. xxiv. 8), and that with blood. Shall we allow a tradition of pharisaical elders to bind the free church of God?

The Psalmist says: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (li. 7). Here, according to Hebrew parallelism, the idea of the first clause is repeated in the second; and he asserts that if purged with hyssop he would be thoroughly cleansed. But how was purification by hyssop performed? It was used in applying the blood of the paschal lamb to the lintels of the doorpost. "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood . . ." (Ex. xii. 22); in the purification of a restored leper (Lev. xiv. 6, 7), and of a house that had had the plague (51); in the preparing of the water of separation (Num. xix. 6-21); and in each of these cases, that is to say, whenever hyssop was used, sprinkling was the method of application; so that a thorough cleansing was symbolized to the Psalmist's mind by sprinkling. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 18-22) we read that Moses "took the blood of calves, and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament (or covenant) which God hath enjoined unto you." If sprinkling were sufficient to signify the application of the blood of the Old Testament, is it not enough to signify that of the New? And, again, referring to the ceremonies of the high priest on the day of intercession, the writer of the same epistle says: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed (not dipped, mark you) with pure water" (x. 22). The washing here is certainly baptism, argues the immersionist. Grant that it be so; then *to baptize* means *to wash*. But, in fact, there is a parallelism here between the purification of the sinner's conscience and the sanctification of the outward person, by which we should understand, according to a New Testament idiom, the conduct of our lives (Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 20). If sprinkling be sufficient to signify the thorough purifying of the conscience, it is enough to signify the washing of the body. So, again, we read (Heb. xii. 24) that we are come "to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel"; and the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 1, 2) speaks of the saints as elect, unto "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

This is in accordance with the language of prophecy: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean (If God says that we may be made clean by sprinkling, does it not savor of impiety to deny it?) from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you (*i. e.* by sprinkling clean water upon them); a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26). Here is everything signified in baptism represented by sprinkling. Are we too bold in claiming the text as a literal prophecy of Christian baptism administered after the proper mode? The prophet Isaiah (lii. 15) also says of the Messiah: "So shall he sprinkle many nations," alluding to the blessings of

salvation, as represented in baptism ; and it is remarkable that the Ethiopian probably read this text just before he was baptized, as he asked Philip to explain the seventh verse after it. In another place, the same prophet says in the name of the Lord : “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ” (xliv. 3) ; that is, he will rain down his blessings as from a full, over-hanging cloud. Thus, you see, whenever the blessings of salvation are spoken of in the Old or New Testament, whether typically, prophetically, or figuratively, they are said to be conferred by the symbolical act of sprinkling, or, in a few places, pouring. We may challenge the immersionists to bring an instance of its being represented by plunging, except, perchance, the somewhat doubtful reference of the pool of Bethesda. The figure of a “ fountain opened,” employed by Zechariah (xiii. 1), does not necessarily imply plunging, as one may wash at a fountain without going in it all over. According to the unanimous language of the sacred writers, sprinkling is not only significant, but by far the most significant mode of representing in baptism the blessings of salvation ; nor is it consistent with Christian simplicity to force upon the church a form derived from the unauthorized traditions of the Jewish elders, the only source to which we can trace baptism by dipping. We are too charitable to deny that baptism by immersion is valid, inasmuch as water is used for the symbol ; but we insist upon being permitted to follow “ a more excellent way.”

3. The greater convenience, and, therefore, expediency of sprinkling.

The greater convenience of our mode is so obvious, that I need not argue on it. Indeed, our Baptist

brethren do not hesitate to consider immersion a cross, and reproach us for not being willing to bear it. But we believe that we are called unto liberty, and that the cross of the Christian life lies in the self-denying practice of Christian virtues, — not in bodily exercises, which profit nothing, while they are apt to puff up with pride.

Therefore we practise, as most expedient and most consonant with the merciful character of the gospel, that method which is least trying to the health and modesty of administrator and subject, which may be practised at all times and in all countries, and with the most decency and ease, and which, above all, is the very method which a crowd of Scriptures recommend.

LECTURE XXXIV.

BAPTISM.

No. 3.

THE SUBJECTS.

TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-SEVENTH LORD'S DAYS.

BAPTISM.

III. — THE SUBJECTS.

IT remains for us to treat of, **FOURTHLY**: The *subjects* to whom Christian baptism should be administered.

From what has been said respecting the authority and design of this sacrament, it is clear that it should be administered to all adult believers who have not previously received the holy ordinance; but our church goes farther, and requires that the *infant offspring* of believers should also be baptized. This we hold in common with all Christians who practised baptism until comparatively modern times, and with the vast majority of Christians now.

The usage of infant baptism may be distinctly traced in Christian writers from the close of the apostolic age all the way down. Justin Martyr, who wrote his "Apology" about the middle of the second century after Christ, and when he must have been about fifty years old, speaking of those who belonged to the Christian church, says that among them were some "who had been made disciples of Christ from their childhood." The term which he employs to signify their being disciplined, is precisely that which we find in the original of our Lord's command to his apostles: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," *i. e. make disciples* of all nations, "baptizing them" (Matt. xxviii. 19); and as

the method prescribed was to baptize those who were disciples, we may safely understand Justin as asserting that the little children were baptized. Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John, writing nearly at the same time with Justin Martyr, says: "Christ came to save all who through him are re-born into God,—infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and older people." The expression "re-born into God," without doubt was meant by him to signify baptized, such being his habit of language. Tertullian, about two hundred years after Christ, had some erroneous notions respecting the peculiar enormity of sins committed after baptism; and advises that infants, if they are likely to die, should be baptized, but otherwise that baptism should be delayed until as late a period of life as possible. In this opinion, it is evident from what he says himself, that he differed from his fellow-Christians generally, who practised infant baptism. Origen, in the former part of the third century, tells us, that the church "derived an order from the apostles to baptize infants"; and again: "According to the custom of the church, baptism is administered to infants, who would not need the grace of baptism, if there was nothing in them that needed forgiveness and mercy." Cyprian, a contemporary of Origen, states that at a council, held in Carthage, A.D. 253, of sixty-six bishops or pastors of churches, one of their number proposed the question: Whether or not a child might be baptized before the eighth day after its birth, which was the time prescribed for circumcision? And the unanimous answer of the council was, "that the mercy and grace of God is to be withheld from no human being born; . . . that we

ought not to debar any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and good to us all ; and this rule, as it holds good for all, we think more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born." Surely, as Lord Chancellor King observes, "the unanimous voice of a synod, in such circumstances, denotes the common practice and usage of the church." Chrysostom, toward the close of the fourth century, speaking of circumcision, says : " Our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, cures without pain, and procures for us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit ; and it has no fixed time, as circumcision had ; but one that is in the beginning of his age, or one in the middle of it, or one that is in old age, may receive this circumcision without hands." Augustine, toward the beginning of the fifth century, says : " The whole church practises infant baptism. It was not instituted by councils, but was always in use." Writing against the Pelagians, one of his most strenuous arguments is, that infants would not be baptized if they had no sin." " They (the Pelagians) grant that infants must be baptized, not being able to resist the authority of the whole church, which was, doubtless, delivered by our Lord and his apostles." In another place, speaking of the proper persons to offer the children for baptism, who he thinks are the parents, if they be pious, he speaks with approbation of those Christians who presented the infants of their slaves, or foundlings, or orphans. Similar declarations are frequent in his works. Pelagius, his great opponent, a native of Britain, who had travelled through southern Europe to Africa and Jerusalem, exclaims indignantly : " Men slander me by the charge that I deny

baptism to infants.” “I never heard of any one, not the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants ; for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized, and so born again in Christ, and thus make them miss of the kingdom of God ? ” Many other testimonies might be added ; but let it suffice to say that no fact in the history of the first four Christian centuries is more firmly established than the universal practice of infant baptism, except by a few, who postponed it like Tertullian for the reason given, or still fewer (of any deserving at all the name of Christian), who thought water-baptism useless.

From the time of Augustine downwards, there is not the slightest trace of an individual, much less of a sect, who denied infant baptism until the year A. D. 1120, when Peter de Bruis, one of the Waldenses, preached against it ; but his followers, called after him Petrobrussians, were very few, and disowned by all the rest of that pious people, who, preserving amidst their mountains the faith derived through their ancestors from apostles, practised, as they practise now, this edifying rite of the Christian church.

So all the churches of the Reformation, though intent more or less upon stripping themselves of the corruptions which had obtained through popery, unanimously consented, as they now consent, to the propriety and authority of infant baptism, with the exception of the sect calling themselves rather arrogantly Baptists, originally known as Anabaptists (from their re-baptizing such as had been baptized when infants, or had been sprinkled), which arose amidst much extravagant fanaticism in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Here, then, we have the opinion of the whole Chris-

tian world from the apostolic age, both before and after the Reformation, — the Baptists excepted, who only within a few years have attained any considerable numbers, on the side of infant baptism. Our opponents cannot show us the slightest evidence that the practice was introduced at any time, though, had it been an innovation, it would have been noted, and must have caused discussion. The utter absence of all proof, or even surmise to the contrary, indicates that it has come to us from the apostles themselves. Besides, as has been urged, and in my judgment with irresistible force, the ordinance of baptism must have been, according to the views of our (so-called) Baptist friends, entirely lost. For, if no one is a member of the visible church unless baptized by immersion at an adult age, and consequently no one not so baptized can administer baptism, there were no legitimately baptized persons at the time the Anabaptists arose, nor had there been during many centuries before.

But we readily admit as sound the Protestant rule of acknowledging no evidence sufficient to establish a rule of Christian faith or practice except that of holy Scripture. What we have adduced from uninspired ecclesiastical history, though strongly corroborative of our practice, has been rather introductory to our argument than part of it; and now we follow our Catechist to the word of God.

“ Quest. 74. *Are infants also to be baptized?*

“ Ans. Yes; for since they, as well as adults, are included in the covenant and church of God, and since redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult, they must, therefore, by baptism,

as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian church, and be distinguished from the children of infidels; as was done in the old covenant, or testament, by circumcision, instead of which baptism is instituted in the new covenant."

So, also, in the form for the administration of baptism, the church says: —

"Although our young children do not understand these things, we may not, therefore, exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ; as God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and, therefore, unto us and our children (Gen. xvii. 7), saying: 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.' This, also, the apostle Peter testifieth with these words (Acts ii. 39): 'For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Therefore, God formerly commanded them to be circumcised, which was a seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness of faith; and, therefore, Christ also embraced them, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them (Mark x. 6). Since, then, baptism is come in the place of circumcision; therefore, infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of his covenant."

Here are the principal arguments for infant baptism distinctly stated, and we shall consider them, following the order of the Catechism.

The infants of believers should be baptized: 1. Be-

cause they are included by the covenant which God through Christ makes with his people. 2. Because they are of right members of the church on earth. 3. Because the promises of the gospel extend to them. 4. Because it is proper that they should be openly distinguished, as the children of the covenanted church, from the children of unbelievers. 5. Because baptism, having come in the place of circumcision, is the authorized method of marking such distinction.

1. The infants of believers should be baptized, because they are covered by the covenant which God through Christ makes with his people.

The strongest, purest, and most lasting affection which God has planted in the human heart is that of the parent for the child. Passion and expected reciprocities of benefits mingle with the love of husband and wife ; marriage is a contract between the espousing parties. Community of interest and habits of close association bind together brothers and sisters of the same family, the bond being often greatly weakened when they go forth into their separate walks of life. Children are trained to love their parents by a consciousness of dependence and gratitude for kindness received from them. But parental love is conceived and born with the child. The father, the mother, love their offspring as part, nay, as a dearer part, of themselves. Their regard is given, not indeed without hopes of their own happiness from their child's happiness and duty, but without bargain, or stipulation, or requisition of pledges. It is free, liberal, unselfish, — an animal instinct dignified to a high and noble affection by a rational sense of obligation, the exercise of which is itself a delight ; so that the parents live for the child, preferring its health,

prosperity, and honor to their own ease or fortunes. Friendship may be turned into hate ; the love of husband and wife may decay and cease ; brothers and sisters may be estranged or quarrel ; children may forget and requite with ill the parents who nurtured them up to adult years ; but for a parent to forget, to call back love, or the fruits of love, from a child, is a thing deemed of all things the most unnatural, a moral insanity, showing a monstrous departure from the due course of the human heart.

The reason why God has given such great strength to this affection is seen in the difficulty and importance of the duties which devolve upon parents. But for their constant, watchful, patient, tender care, the babe would perish ; or, if nursed only through the helplessness of infancy, would seldom reach mature age through the inexperience of childhood and the novel temptations which throng upon the youth. Nothing short of the strongest love could secure even the physical nurture of their offspring ; much more is it necessary for the mental and moral training which they need. It is the wise, fixed arrangement of Providence that parents should stand between God and their seed, as his agents to provide for their well-being in both these respects. Our heavenly father has proceeded upon this principle in all his dealings with our race, making parental affection an argument for parental fidelity, encouraging it by promises, and alarming it by threats. How true this was of the first covenant he made with man, the melancholy consequences of our first parents' sin but too plainly declare ; and it were strange indeed if children could be so deeply concerned with the fall of Adam, and yet no provision be made

for their uprising with Christ. Their representation before their birth, in their primal ancestor, establishes beyond doubt the law of such representation in subsequent stages of our human history, though, for obvious reasons, not to the same extent. No one doubts that in the affairs of this life, children suffer or are advantaged by their parents' conduct; and, in the order of civil society, the parent is ever recognized as the representative of his child until it is of age to assume its own responsibility. Thus God declares, that he is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him"; but, also, that "his righteousness is unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and remember his commandments to do them." Hence we find that parental anxiety has been assuaged, and parental responsibility enforced by every covenant made with man under the system of grace. The first revelation of mercy at the very gates of the lost paradise was to the parents through their seed, when God said in their hearing to the serpent-tempter: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," — a prophecy fulfilled in the triumphant passion of Christ, the son of a virgin; nor could the believers of that promise offer a sacrifice in faith without including the offspring through whom the deliverer was to come.

So in the covenant with Noah, after the deluge, God expressly declared: "Behold, I establish my covenant with thee and with thy seed." To Abraham he said: "Behold, my covenant is with thee . . . Behold, I establish my covenant with thee, and with thy seed after

thee.” Nay, to show that this covenant included his seed from their early infancy, he appointed the sacrament of circumcision to be performed when the children were but eight days old. In this sense God continued to declare himself as the God of Israel, declaring the whole nation to be “his people”; and upon one remarkable occasion Moses required not only the men of Israel but their wives and their little ones to stand before the Lord “and enter into covenant with the Lord their God, and into his oath, which the Lord their God made with them that day” (Deut. xxix. 10–15). Such was the faith and practice of the ancient believers up to the time when the descent of the Holy Ghost at the Pentecost confirmed the church of Christ. Can we be made to believe that this gospel was less merciful to parental hearts than the older dispensation, and that they were refused the highly valued privilege, enjoyed by believers in all previous times, of dedicating their offspring openly to the Lord? No; for the apostle Peter, in the very hour when the spirit of God came down, proclaimed that the promise was unto them and their children, and to them that was afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God should call. So we read that the angel of the Lord commanded Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, to send to Joppa for Peter, who should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved (Acts xi. 13, 14); and Paul, in his exhortation to the jailer, said: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” The same apostle also declares, when speaking of those believers who were married to heathen: “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the hus-

band, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy" (1 Cor. vii. 14). Holy does not, we admit, in this passage signify personal freedom from sin, but fitness to be dedicated to God; yet, surely, the text has no meaning, if they might not be openly dedicated.

From this clearly established principle of the representation of children in the believing parent, it follows, —

2. That they (the children of believers) are of right members of the church on earth.

Such, we have seen, was the fact and the practice of the church under the Abrahamic dispensation. Every Israelite was by birth entitled to membership of the church, the sign of which was circumcision of the male infants. That the Christian church is a continuation of the Abrahamic, the apostle puts beyond all reasonable doubt when he asserts that "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii. 9), to whom God preached the gospel when he said: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (8, v.); and again: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and children according to the promise" (29, v.). It is vain to say that the covenant of God with Abraham, into which the newly born Israelite was brought by circumcision, had reference only to temporal blessings; for the apostle often asserts that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, though certain temporal blessings were also secured by it to his natural posterity. If, then, infants were admitted as members of the church under the old dispensation, how can it be denied that they are not to be admitted under the new? If it were right in the one, it must be right in the other

case, because the fundamental constitution of both is the same : justification by faith. Where we ask, is there any proof in all the New Testament writings that the right of believers to church-membership is taken away ? Where is there a single text to show that the Christian believer may not dedicate his child as the Jewish believer was privileged to do ? On the contrary, we find four instances of entire households being baptized : that of Cornelius, that of Lydia, that of the jailer, and that of Stephanas. If it be objected to this, that we do not know whether there were any but adults capable of personal faith in these households, we answer that one could scarcely take four families at random without finding some infants among them ; and, besides, the promise in the case of the jailer was to him as the head of his house : “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.” Not, “ If thy house also believe, they shall also be saved ” ; but, “ Believe thou, and thy house shall be saved with thee.” The same thing is intimated to Cornelius by the angel : “ He (Peter) shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” So Peter at the Pentecost : “ Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost ; for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off (*i. e.* the Gentiles), even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.” There the promise and baptism go together ; and if the children were included by the promise, they had also the privilege of receiving the baptism which was the sign of the promise.

We are aware of the cavil against this view, that

the reception of baptism is a profession of faith, and, therefore, as infants are not capable of faith, they are not capable of receiving baptism. Circumcision was a sign of faith, as much as baptism is; the infant Israelite received it on the faith of his parent; so may the child of the Christian believer receive it on the faith of his parent. Besides, it savors of strong impiety to say that infants may not be members of Christ's church, when he himself took special pains to declare that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Nay, when he rebuked his disciples for keeping back the mothers who pressed forward to lay their little ones in the Saviour's arms: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." How can children be brought openly to Christ as members of his kingdom, but by Christian baptism, in the initiatory rite ordained by himself? How can we lay them in his arms, but by committing them to the embrace of his church?

3. The promises of the gospel extend to the infants of believers.

This we have already seen; but under the Old Testament the parents were required to claim the promise for their offspring according to the external rites of the law; so are believers under the New Testament to testify their belief in the promise of God respecting their children by the rite of the gospel. It is not enough for a man that he believes; he must be baptized in token of his belief; so it is not enough that the parent believes in the promise to his child; he must present his child for baptism in token of his belief; nor can he claim the blessing of the covenant except he avails himself of its seal. Thus, it is a sin on his own part, and injustice toward his unconscious child, not to ask the

blessing for it according to the manner which God has ordained.

This is the more important,

4. Because it is proper that the children of believers should be distinguished openly from the children of unbelievers.

The church is the visible representative of the kingdom of God upon earth. As the children of a citizen inherit, of course, the citizenship, so does the child of a church-member, by actual descent, become entitled to church-membership until he forfeits it by his own conduct. It is, therefore, a privilege of the believer to enroll his offspring among the openly covenanted people of God. It is a duty which he owes to the world, that he may show his high sense of the Christian name. It is his duty to his child thus to put him in the position which will remind him, when of years to understand, that he is of the covenanted seed. Volumes might be filled with the blessed consequences of such faith and such open avowal of it. And were Christians more faithful in following up the vows and obligations they assume, and in impressing upon their children the obligations under which they rest, the numbers of such blessed consequences would be greatly enlarged.

5. Because baptism is come in the place of circumcision, it is the authorized method of marking the distinction between the children of the covenanted church and those of unbelievers. That baptism has come in the place of circumcision, we have already proved. Circumcision was the initiatory rite of the old dispensation. Baptism is that of the new. Circumcision has been done away, baptism remains ; therefore is it in

the place of circumcision. The objection that circumcision was confined to the males, and therefore cannot be succeeded by baptism which females are also to receive, is preposterous. All who are in Christ are to be baptized ; but in Christ there is neither male nor female, and therefore all are to be baptized without distinction of sex. If our other arguments in favor of infant baptism are valid, it must be administered to all the infants of believers, as the more gracious sign of a new and better dispensation.

LECTURE XXXV.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SUPPER.

PART I.

ITS INSTITUTION AND ITS MODE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE SUPPER.

I.—ITS INSTITUTION AND ITS MODE.

QUEST. LXXV. *How art thou admonished and assured in the Lord's supper that thou art a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits?*

ANS. Thus: that Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and, further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.

QUEST. LXXVI. *What is it, then, to eat (of) the crucified body and drink (of) the shed blood of Christ?*

ANS. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain pardon of sin and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are, notwithstanding, "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone," so that we live and are governed forever by one spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.

QUEST. LXXVII. *Where has Christ promised that he will as certainly feed and nourish believers with his body and blood, as they eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup?*

ANS. In the institution of the supper it is thus expressed: "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. xi. 23-26. The promise is repeated by the holy apostle Paul, when he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" 1 Cor. x. 16.

HAVING carefully considered and expounded the doctrine and benefits of holy baptism, which is the ordinance initiatory to the church of Christ visible on

earth, we shall now treat in full of THE HOLY SUPPER, which is the confirmatory ordinance of our faith and practice as members of the Christian church ; for, as it is necessary to our salvation, not only that we should believe and profess Christ's religion, but also should persevere in the duties of Christian practice even to the end of our lives, so it is necessary that not only we should be born again of the Spirit, but also that we should be nourished by the Spirit to a constant growth of our divine life until it is made perfect in glory. Hence the appointment of the holy supper, which, by its expressive emblems and frequent administration, represents and confirms to the believer the maintenance and increase of his Christianity from his communion and enjoyment of Christ, his only life, strength, and head. Before entering on our proposed discussion, let us remind ourselves of the definition which our church gives of the sacraments in the Twenty-fifth Lord's Day, sixty-sixth question and answer of the Catechism : " The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel, viz: that he grants us freely the remission of our sins, and life eternal, for the sake of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross." They are *holy*, for it is necessary that they be appointed of God ; *visible*, for they are ordinances of the church visible : they are *signs* to represent invisible, because spiritual, realities ; and *seals*, because they are granted to confirm the word of grace in the promises of the gospel ; and they are intended to bring us to a more lively contemplation and appropriation of the salvation accomplished for us by the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Not forgetting these fundamental facts and truths, we must consider this second sacrament, commonly called the Lord's supper, under several heads : —

FIRST : *Its institution.* SECONDLY : *Its mode.* THIRDLY : *Its purpose.* FOURTHLY : *Its participants.*

This order is somewhat changed from that of the Catechism, but no more than is desirable for the sake of convenience.

FIRST : *The institution or appointment of the Lord's supper.*

Our blessed Lord, being by his human lineage and by his circumcision one of the Israelitish church, observed all its ordinances until their end was accomplished by his vicarious death on the cross. Of these ordinances, the Passover, or feast of the paschal lamb, was the principal. It represented two things : *first*, the salvation of the first-born of Israel from the angel who slew all the first-born of Egypt, and distinguished the dwellings of the chosen people by the blood of the lamb slain under divine command, which was sprinkled on their door-posts ; *secondly*, the exodus of Israel out of Egypt by the miraculous deliverance and guidance of God, the covenanted Jehovah of their fathers. It was essential to the observance of this feast that a spotless firstling male of the flock should be slain (care being taken that not a bone of it was broken), and that each Israelite should partake of its flesh as their families were assembled in convenient numbers for the purpose. The time of its celebration was in the evening of the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, the lamb having been slain on the first.

Our Lord had observed the other passovers without

special comment to his disciples ; but the evangelists represent him as preparing for the last, which was on the night in which he was betrayed, with peculiar care and solemnity. “ With desire,” said he, as he sat down with the twelve apostles, “ I have desired to eat of this passover before I suffer.” The reasons for this are obvious. The passover, though commemorative, was in a higher degree typical. The event it commemorated was typical of the deliverance of his people from the death of the law, and their deliverance out of the bondage of Satan. The paschal lamb typified himself, at once the sacrifice for his people, and their deliverer. He was about to fulfil by his death on the cross, and by his resurrection, all the salvation God had promised by covenant and by sign. He, therefore, avails himself of the last opportunity before he suffered, and of the expressive rite itself, to ordain for his church in all ages a sacrament which should confirm their faith by a remembrance of his death and their deliverance. Three evangelists give an account of his action in nearly the same words. Matthew says : “ As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he took the cup (for wine was always used at the paschal supper) and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Luke’s version varies from those of Matthew and Mark by adding after the words “ This is my body ”—“ which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me.” That our Lord meant thus to institute a perpetual ordinance is established by the manifest import of the words themselves, and the practice of the

church on and after the day of Pentecost ; but also put beyond doubt by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 23–26 : “ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread ; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye, as oft as ye drink of it, in remembrance of me. For, as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.”

From this collation of these several passages, we note several things : 1. That our Lord changed the Passover, which was a sacrament of the Old Testament, or covenant with Abraham, into the Lord’s supper, as a sacrament of the New Testament, or the covenant of God with Christ, as the head of his church. 2. That our Lord brake not the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was a sacrifice, but bread, which is an emblem of nourishment ; and afterward represented his blood by wine, which is an emblem of joy, for the cup of wine which our Lord thus used was at the end of the Passover, and was called the cup of blessing, or praise, or of salvation (Ps. cxvi. 13) ; thus showing that there was to be no farther expiatory sacrifice or shedding of blood, but that the doctrine of the sacrament, as a commemoration of Christ’s death, was thenceforward to be the nourishment and joy of Christian souls. 3. That, as the sacrament was one of faith in the accomplishment of salvation by the death of Christ, and of thanksgiving for such inestimable benefits, it was to continue until Christ,

who is not dead but risen, shall come from the right hand of the Father to receive his people unto himself.

4. That they who by true faith partake of the elements, bread and wine, thus ordained and consecrated, become united to Christ's body, and so are made partakers of all the benefits which Christ, the head of the church, receives by virtue of the covenant of God the Father for the church, which is his body.

We also learn the reasons for the several appellations given to this sacrament: The Lord's supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), because it was ordained at the paschal supper in the evening; the Lord's table (1 Cor. x. 21), because the disciples were and are gathered around a table at the head of which he was, and by his spirit still is, — not an altar, as though it were a sacrifice, but a table, because it is a feast; the communion (1 Cor. x. 16), because those who receive it are made partakers individually and in common of the body of Christ, and so are confirmed in fellowship with him and with each other in him: "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread;" the eucharist, or thanksgiving, a name not given to it expressly by any Scripture, but with good reason adopted by the church, because it is a sacrament of praise and thanksgiving for the great benefits flowing from Christ's meritorious death to all who truly receive him into their hearts. For we must remember, again, that our sacrament was not instituted until after the last passover, and the cup of wine was that which the Israelites were accustomed to partake of at the close of their feast, and was called by them the cup of salvation, or of thanksgiving. Thus all the circumstances of its institution by our divine Lord, and all the names

by which it was known to the primitive church, show that this sacrament is not a sacrifice offered in hope of benefits to be obtained, but a thankful celebration and believing participation of benefits already purchased for us by Christ on the cross, and held for us as an open treasury of full supplies by Christ on his throne till he come again at the consummation of all things.

We are now prepared to consider,

SECONDLY: *The mode of this sacrament.*

1. The *elements*, or the material signs. These are bread and wine.

The *bread*, with which our Lord actually instituted the sacrament, being the bread of the Passover, was undoubtedly unleavened bread, which has, in ages past, led some to think that a careful conformity to our Lord's example should require us to use no other in our celebrations of it. Indeed, there was a fierce dispute between the scholastic doctors of the Roman church and the doctors of the Greek church on this point: the Greeks calling the Latins opprobriously *azymites* (*a*, priv., and ζύμη, leaven), because they consecrated unleavened bread, and the Latins retorting angrily on the Greeks for having departed from the primitive usage. The Latins were, however, by no means unanimous in this respect, for the schoolmen met with stout opponents from among their own communion; and I believe the general sentiment of the Romish doctors is against the schoolmen. It is decided by learned men that the use of unleavened bread and wafers was unknown in the church, except among the heretical Ebionites, until the eleventh century at the earliest, the bread before that time being taken from the offerings of bread and wine brought by the communicants for the use of the

poor,* when of course the bread was leavened. Some of the early fathers (as Ambrose, *De Sac.* iv. 4) expressly say that the bread they used was common bread (*panis usitatus*).† The only scripture bearing upon this point is that in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8 : “ For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” There is no reason, however, to think that the apostle there is giving directions about the eucharist, but that he only uses a striking figure to signify the purity and humility and unanimity which the church should maintain. There was a commemorative reason for the use of unleavened bread in the Passover, which commemorated the haste of the Israelites in escaping from Egypt, but it has no significance under the New Testament ; and it should be rejected as a part of the painful services required under the now obsolete yoke of bondage. Bread in our sacrament is an emblem of strength and confidence, which the absence of leaven would impair. But it is essential to the sacrament that bread, not wafers, — substantial, home-like, every-day bread, — should be employed and partaken of, in order to our more complete realization

* We know from Acts ii. 44, 45, that, during the great Pentecostal blessings, the early Christians held all their means for the relief of their poorer brethren “ as every man had need.” It would be, therefore, natural and likely that they would bring offerings for the poor when they came to the Lord’s table, which offerings might be in kind, as bread and wine, or in money. Certainly, from the earliest times, gifts to the poor were accompaniments of the sacrament ; and the custom in our churches of making a collection for the poor of the Lord’s house at the communion table has thus come down to us from the Pentecost, and should never be omitted. It is part of the eucharistical, or thanksgiving, service.

† See Bingham, *Ecc. Ant.* Vol. V. p. 196, *et seq.*

of our constant dependence on Christ for the support of our Christian life. Indeed, we have reason to know that the early Christians not only celebrated the Lord's supper often, but that they were wont to make an imitation of it when they sat down to their ordinary meal, especially when believers long parted, or from a distance, chanced to meet together.

Wine, in the second part of the sacrament or communion of the cup, is the element essential to its right administration. There can be no question that our Lord used wine ; for not only was the cup of blessing at the close of the Passover filled with wine, but both Matthew and Mark tell us that immediately afterwards he said : " I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." The cup was an emblem of joy, which could not have been if it were filled with any other liquid. It was also significant of the manner in which Christ's blood was pressed out of him by his agony, as the wine is pressed from the grapes. It was also in accordance with the prophecies, especially that remarkable one in Isaiah (xxv. 6), where he employs the figure of a feast to describe the evangelical dispensation : " And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees ; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." Some say that the wine employed by the Saviour and drunk by the Jews at the Passover was not intoxicating wine, but a species of must ; yet this is far from being ascertained, besides being contradictory to Isaiah's description of it as wine on the lees well refined, and also destructive of the idea of joy or exhilaration. The plea for substituting some

unfermented drink, such as water or milk, in the place of wine, that it encourages, perhaps suggests, intemperance, is profane, for it impeaches the propriety of our Lord's example, as if it were not sufficient in all ages. Yet to such impious lengths has a superscriptural zeal for reform been carried by some who would be wiser than their infallible Lord ! No wonder that their reform has been so greatly a failure ; for the pleasure of him whose blessing alone can make efforts at good efficient must be withheld from measures which fortify themselves by disobedience to the divine command, and impeachment of Christ's wisdom and exemplary virtue. Care should be taken that the wine is the genuine fruit of the grape, not the base mixtures which counterfeit ; and pure wine can be obtained, if sufficient care be taken.

There can, however, be little doubt that the practice of mingling the sacramental wine with water obtained largely in the primitive church. It was based on the asserted custom of the Jews so to mingle the wine of the Passover with water, and also on the fact that when our Lord's heart was pierced by the spear of the soldier, there flowed from it blood mingled with water. The more learned doctors, both Romanist and Protestant, are now mostly agreed in thinking the practice unnecessary. The wines of Palestine are strong and heady, so as to give a reason for their being reduced, which does not exist now, when light, pure wines may be readily obtained ; and as to the water which flowed from the heart (or *pericardium*) of our Lord, he himself makes no allusion to it, but speaks only of the wine when appointing the cup as the sign of the New Testament. There can, however, be little objection made to

the mingling of water with the sacramental wine, but there is no authority for it ; and it is best not to go beyond what is written.

2. The *formula*, or, as our church expresses it, “ words of the institution.”

As the church, having no right to ordain sacramental ceremonies, is bound to receive and observe those which our Lord and his apostles have appointed, the sacrament of the Lord’s supper is not validly administered except the authority and purpose of it be declared out of the word of God, by the solemn, formal recital of our Lord’s own language when instituting the supper, and that of the apostle Paul where he confirms and further enjoins it. Thus our church, in her “ form,” or office, “ for the administration of the Lord’s supper,” begins it by reciting the passage (1 Cor. xi. 23–30) in which the apostle Paul cites from the gospels the account of its appointment by our Lord himself ; and, also, adds his apostolical declaration of our duty and meaning and responsibility rightly to observe it. Not satisfied with this, in a subsequent part of the form, and that we who faithfully commune may firmly believe that we belong to the covenant of grace, our church repeats the account from the gospels of the last supper of our Lord with his disciples.

From the necessities of our nature we may often partake of bread and wine in company with fellow-Christians, and like the early Christians we may see in our household meal parables of the body and blood of Christ ; but it is obvious that the confusion of such ordinary meals with the divine sacrament of the supper would lead to licentious and impious abuse. The apostle, in the same chapter which enjoins the sacrament,

evidently rebukes abuses of this sort when he says: "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper; for in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." He then proceeds with the solemn words: "For I have received of the Lord Jesus that which also I delivered unto you," &c. Hence we infer, that, as in the administration of baptism the formula appointed by our Lord, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," should be pronounced, so the administration of this sacrament is not valid, except the words which our Lord and his apostle used in its appointment and confirmation be reverently employed to distinguish it from all other feasts.

It does not follow, however, that the words of institution may not be accompanied by instructions and exhortations fitted to the service. On the contrary, such are highly desirable for the better acquaintance of the people with their duties and privileges. Experience has shown that, notwithstanding the revealed teachings on the subject, people are prone to misunderstand and misappropriate the sacrament; and, therefore, as preaching upon other Scriptures is no dishonor to their efficiency, but a specially appointed means of edification, so such exposition may be made, and with profit, of the Scriptures ordaining the sacraments. It has also been found, that, at the time of celebrating this very solemn rite, the hearts of the people are more than usually disposed to hear and receive instruction respecting the

great facts and doctrines and duties of religion ; and therefore it is most meet and desirable that such instruction should be carefully given. So important did this appear to our fathers of the Reformed churches, that they all (I am not aware of any exception in Great Britain or on the Continent) prepared, with great pains, forms, or offices, which should be used whenever the Lord's supper was administered. This they did, evidently, from a consideration that, though a faithful and intelligent pastor would not administer the sacrament without a due exposition of it, yet, that there might be found pastors too careless or less qualified to expound it fully ; and so, to secure the instruction of the people and to prevent errors or abuses creeping in, the churches took the duty into their own hands, so far as to require the reading or recital of a sufficient form which had their corporate sanction. Any reader of the disputes and difficulties which occurred then respecting the doctrine and manner of the supper, will see at once how necessary such appointed forms were ; and any one who knows the deceitfulness of the human heart will acknowledge that what has occurred may occur again. Some of the Reformed churches, as the Presbyterian in Great Britain and this country, have allowed their ancient forms to become obsolete ; but our church, like the churches of the Continent, has retained in her service-book the form prepared and appointed by our fathers. Its excellence, though somewhat marred by defects and errors in our translation, is so high, that it may without extravagance be pronounced the best uninspired commentary on the Lord's supper, of equal length, in any language. Our church does not claim authority to dictate beyond the

warrant of Holy Scriptures ; but when she solemnly recommends, through the unanimous voice of her assemblies and presbyters and people for so many years, a form of sound words in full undoubted accordance with the articles of her faith, which we profess to believe, for the better and uniform administration of the sacrament, it seems only decent and just that such form should be used, except in such very extraordinary cases where it would be impracticable or burdensome. To allow each or any administrator of the sacrament to omit parts of the form at his option would be to risk the value of the whole, as he might omit parts in order to screen his own unsoundness of doctrine or discipline from the condemnation of the church. For one man, from his own personal judgment of its fitness or unfitness, to omit or amend the words of our united church, savors little of modesty and much of impertinent presumption. If the form be faulty, from the great length or for any other reason, let it be duly altered by the united, pious wisdom of the church ; but it were painful to think of leaving her well-digested, venerable words to the rashness of every self-sufficient, egotistical meddler who sets himself up for a pope in his little sphere. As it is, if the form be faithfully and solemnly read, our Christian people are, at least four times a year, reminded and made to consider the doctrines and duties taught by the sacrament in a discourse or treatise so able and pious that there lives no single man, whatever be his intellect or attainments, who can write one as good, or amend it by omission or addition. Guard that precious form, beloved Christians, from corruption or garbling. If the united church sees fit to make changes in it, there is little doubt of their being judi-

cious ; but frown upon any attempt to touch its integrity by any individual.

3. The *action*.

It is not enough that the bread and wine be set forth to the eyes of the people, but essential to the sacrament that the very action of our Lord, when he presented the elements to his disciples, should be called to mind, and this by the action of the administrator ; for as the sacrament is in every part a sign, so every part of the sign should be preserved and perpetuated, that thereby the things signified should be visibly, *i. e.* by visible forms, brought before the people for their spiritual edification. Therefore, the bread should be broken, and the wine poured forth or extended (for we do not read that our Lord did actually pour the wine into the cup when he consecrated it), the administrator at the same time declaring, in the words of Scripture, that the broken bread and the wine in the cup are separate by the communion, the one of the body, the other of the blood of Christ. For it is not the bread in the loaf, or the wine in the cup, which is the communion of Christ, but the bread and the cup, distributed and received by the communicants with their mouth. Hence the apostle says : “ The cup of blessing which *we* bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which *we* break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? ” which shows clearly that the action of our Lord is to be repeated by the officiator. The action of the sacrament is not complete, therefore, even with the distribution of the elements, but only when the believer actually receives them within his mouth, and both eats the one and drinks the other, so that there be a real participation. The administrator does

diminish the significance of the table, bring forward the communicants in successive groups suited to the size of the table, administering the elements to each group by themselves. But in so doing they lose the perhaps equally necessary idea of communing together and at the same time as one family. They may, it is true, commune together in spirit, but the outward visible form of the communion is not fully maintained. As the apostle says: "Every one taketh before other his own supper."

Some other churches, as our own, have adopted the opposite and scarcely less offensive plan of gathering as many as may be conveniently brought around the table, and allowing the rest to occupy the ordinary seats of the church, trusting that in their own minds they will consider themselves as at the table, while communing with their brethren and sisters there. Still the significance of the Lord's table is greatly impaired. Nor do we hesitate to say that the expedient is the reverse of edifying. Certainly, it should not be resorted to except by necessity. The table should be as large as possible, and no other seats occupied, but when it is filled. The aged or infirm may very well be allowed to keep their previous places, for the gospel requires no painful ordinances; but others have no such excuse, and ought not to lose any benefit of the instructive figure. If the table be not large enough for all, those who cannot find places at it should at least change to others, that they in outward act as well as in thought go to the holy table.

Let it not be said that mere form is of little account, so that the heart be right. What is the external administration of the Lord's supper but a form? and

ordained for the very reason that, in the wisdom of God, form is necessary to the exhibition of the Christian church to the world and to itself? and that the appointed sacraments, as outward visible forms, or signs or seals, are highly edifying, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, to those who profess Christ? The same argument that would do away with one part of the form would do away with the sacrament altogether; which is the case with the Friends or Quakers, who reject the outward sacraments, because, as they say, they spiritually receive the truths which those forms signify.

The Puritans, with all their other virtues and services to Christianity, did the cause of religion much harm by stripping the outward church of associations, which, from our human nature, God has mercifully and wisely employed for the edification and comfort of his people while yet in the body of flesh. As the Quaker rejects all colors but drab, though God has scattered variegated beauty on every side, so the Puritan rejected all but straight lines, though the graceful curve is seen in every leaf and wave and form of living creature. We may not, from our own fancy or taste, attempt to improve on the forms which God has appointed, or introduce superscriptural novelties; but we should retain all the illustrations of truth he has given us, especially in the sacraments. We are weak creatures, wholly dependent on God's Holy Spirit through the means of grace for our upholding; and the church is compared to a vine which has not strength of its own to stand erect; but the vine clasps the supporting elm or trellis-work by its curling tendrils, — tendrils because they are tender, — not by its trunk or stronger branches

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only. So every association of the sacrament has its uses to help the tender faith and clinging affections of the lowly-minded communicant, conscious of his own weakness, but clasping the strength of Christ. We are not Puritans, but of the Reformed churches.

You see by these observations that our church rejects those customs, in observing the Lord's supper, which have greatly assisted the abominable perversions of the Popish mass, as we shall have occasion farther to show. Adopting the profane and absurd belief that the bread and the wine were actually transubstantiated (or changed in substance) to the actual body and blood of our Lord, the adherents of a heathenish compound with Christianity soon came to believe that the eucharist was also an actual repetition of our Lord's one meritorious sacrifice on the cross. Hence they were so fond as to consider the officiating minister a *priest* or sacrificer, contending that when he pronounced the words "This is my body," and "This is my blood," the bread and the wine not only underwent in his hands the transubstantiation, but also became the victim which he (the priest) had sacerdotal power to offer meritoriously to God for the remission of sins. Hence, also, the holy table came to be regarded as *the altar* on which the sacrifice of the mass was offered; and as they were taught that the divinity of Christ was actually in the bread and wine, they were required to *kneel* in adoration.

It is not denied that at an early date some Christian writers called the communion table the altar, — but *Θυσιαστήριον*, never *βωμός*; which latter word is used only once in the New Testament (Acts vii. 23); but it is certain that, until the rise of transubstantiation, they

employed the term as synonymous with the sacred table. The New Testament *nowhere* assumes even this, and, therefore, no usage can justify it.

Rejecting, as the Reformed churches do, the whole doctrine of the mass, the transubstantiation, and the sacrifice, and regarding the sacrament as a commemorative and illustrative supper or feast, we also reject the word priest, other than as applied to Christ, the High Priest, or to every Christian who offers thanks unto God; we also reject the word *altar*, believing that Christ in heaven is the only altar of his church, and we sit at the Lord's table as guests of Christ, and do not *kneel* in idolatry of what we believe to be mere emblems.

There are Protestant churches in which the terms priest and altar, with the kneeling posture at the eucharist, are retained; but they are remnants of a superstition which should be considered exploded, and guarded against accordingly. Luther, though he rejected the priesthood of the clergy, and the repetition of Christ's sacrifice, yet clung to the Popish doctrine so far as to claim for the elements a *consubstantiation*, as he termed it, with Christ's real person. So his followers retain the term altar, and kneel at it when receiving the sacrament. During the Reformation in England, under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, the court politicians, and some clergy only half-converted from Rome, were anxious to conform the Protestant church as much as they could to the old superstitions, that the prejudices of the people might not be shocked by too great a change of ritual. Hence, in spite of vigorous remonstrances from more determined reformers in the new English church, they forced upon it many things

which had better have been abandoned, and among them the terms priest and altar, and this kneeling at the eucharist. No doubt, many pious people among them kneel around the altar without any remnant of idolatrous superstition, contending that *kneeling* is a most solemn posture, fitted for so solemn an act. But as it destroys the idea of communion at the table of the Lord, kneeling, though a fit posture in other devotional acts, has no fitness at the holy communion. It is a variation from our Lord's own method, and it gives favor to gross errors.

5. The *administrator*.

As was said in treating of baptism, the proper person to administer the Lord's supper is the ordained minister, the bishop settled or acting for the time being, of the church, — that is the pastor, who, from his very name, is to feed the flock of Christ. At every feast some one sits at the head of the table; and Christ is spiritually at the head of his own. But as it is a sensible rite, it is proper that the Master should be visibly represented, which can be by none so properly as by one of those whom he has appointed to proclaim his word, and whom he has set as overseers of his house. Hence we find that no sect or denomination of Christians who acknowledge an ordained ministry allow the administration of this sacrament to any other hands than theirs. As they have succeeded the apostles in the office of preaching, so they succeed the apostles in this.

As helpers are required to distribute the elements among the people, our church commits the service not to the elders, who are joined with the minister in the oversight of the church, but to the deacons, whose

very name signifies servants, and who were appointed to serve tables. This service, it is true, was for the poor ; but are we not all poor, and do we not receive the Lord's bounty at his holy table ? Who so proper, then, as the servants of the Lord's poor to minister of his bread and wine to us ?

6. The *times* of observance.

It appears from Scripture that the celebration of this sacrament was, at the beginning, part of every Lord's day's service, as we read (Acts xx. 7) : " Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Nay, it would seem that during the great joy of the Pentecost it was celebrated every day ; for they, " continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat [food] with gladness and singleness of heart." The probability is, that, greatly needing divine consolations in their trials, and being prevented by their persecutors from assembling regularly as they would wish, they availed themselves of every opportunity to enjoy the blessings of sacramental communion. Some of the early sects continued to celebrate it every day ; and it is quite certain from ecclesiastical history that it was not omitted on the first day of the week for at least three centuries after Christ, so that Chrysostom calls the Lord's day, *dies panis*, the Day of Bread.

As the church through her superstitions relapsed into coldness, the necessity of frequent communion was less insisted on. Whereas, first, the Christian professor was censured for omitting the communion on any one Lord's day, he was then required to commune once at least in three weeks, then once a month.

then four or three times a year, then once a year. Yet, notwithstanding such latitude to the people, the church of Rome, as the Eastern church, celebrates the sacrament, however improperly, every Lord's day for such as are willing to receive it. It is remarkable also that Calvin, among other censurers of the church of Rome, and of those partly, though not entirely, out from under its influence, reprobates the infrequency of communion as a "most certain invention * of the devil," and says that "at least every week the table of the Lord should be spread for assembled Christians."

Whether or not our church is wholly right in celebrating the communion only four times a year (it was at first six times, that is, every other month †), may not be without question. The plea for such infrequency, however, is, that more frequent communions have a tendency to render the sacrament less duly regarded, and degenerates into formality. In days of persecution and martyrdom, Christians were more lively, and had a stronger appetite for the holy bread and wine; whereas now it is necessary to stir up their minds to the duty by special appeals and preparation, which could not be done so thoroughly if it were more often administered. This only acknowledges the remissness of the church, instead of justifying her present practice; and we must believe that if the church were more awake to the great benefits of the Lord's supper, we should recur to the primitive usage.

It is not my part, however, to condemn the practice which our church chooses to maintain, though I am bound in treating of the sacrament to give the facts. I

* Certissimum inventum diaboli. Instit. Lib. iv. 17, 60.

† Vectii Disputa, Vol. IV. p. 761.

may not venture to say more, but I have not dared to say less.

It may, however, be added that, though the Scriptures distinctly prescribe the manner of the celebration, they nowhere prescribe the times or the frequency of it ; and, therefore, latitude is allowed to the judgment of the church and the conscience of the individual Christian. Still, as the declaration is, that “ as often as we eat of this bread and drink of this cup we do show the Lord’s death till he come,” the latitude allowed cannot be great to the Christian who desires to grow in grace and the knowledge of his Lord.

Some Christians, though comparatively few, have deemed it necessary to imitate the first communion so closely as to insist upon its celebration in the evening, that it may be actually a supper ; and it would appear that the breaking of bread spoken of in Acts xx. 7 was in the evening, for Paul preached “ until midnight.” In the days of persecution, also, it would be the safest time to engage in religious exercises. But it savors of too great rigidity to contend that the sacrament should not be administered at the time of day most convenient for the assembly of the people ; and, no doubt, there was, and might be again, much licentious evil suspected of, and even occasioned by such late meetings. The apostolical injunction, “ Let all things be done decently and in order,” sufficiently justifies our present practice, which others may vary from, if they choose, as is their right. It should be observed, however, that the Greek term rendered supper (*δειπνον*) may be used for any meal, even the first of the day, though perhaps more frequently signifying the principal meal, which was in the afternoon.

Some churches, Protestant as well as Papist, allow the administration of the eucharist to sick and dying persons. Our church has not taken any formal order on the subject, but the general, though not universal, sentiment among us is against it, because very liable to superstitious and rash abuse. The sacrament, by its very name of communion, is a public ordinance intended for the whole church, and not for the edification of the individual believer except in union with the assembled church, nor can it be partaken of privately without diminution of its purpose. It were better, therefore, to avoid the danger; and in this opinion a conscientious Christian would coincide, even at the loss of some personal comfort.

LECTURE XXXVI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH AND TWENTY-NINTH LORD'S DAYS.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

(CONTINUED.)

QUEST. LXXVIII. *Do, then, the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?*

ANS. Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God, so the bread in the Lord's supper is not changed into the very body of Christ, though, agreeable to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

QUEST. LXXIX. *Why, then, doth Christ call the bread his body, and the cup his blood, or, the New Testament in his blood; and Paul, the "communion of the body and blood of Christ"?*

ANS. Christ speaks thus not without great reason, namely, not only to teach us, that, as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but, more especially, by these visible signs and pledges, to assure us, that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood (by the operations of the Holy Ghost), as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction to God.

THIRDLY: *The purpose of the sacrament of the supper.*

The solemn and affecting circumstances of its institution by our blessed Lord, the peculiar stress laid upon its observance by the apostolical command, the great prominence it has, and has always had, in the religious services of the church, the comfort derived from partaking of it by believers of all ages, and the regard in which it is universally held as the most awful ceremony

and august spectacle Christianity offers to the contemplation of both Christians and the world, all teach us the high importance of rightly understanding its design and purport, to both of which, as comprehended by one word, our thoughts must now be directed.

From the several considerations we have already had on the subject, we learn that, while the sacrament of the supper is an ordinance by which God in salvation addresses us, it is also an ordinance in the completion of which we are to take an active part. Hence, the purpose of the sacrament is to be looked for in two directions: *first*, as to what God intends by this sacrament to do for us; and, *secondly*, as to what he, by this sacrament, requires us to do for ourselves and for him.

1. What God purposes by this sacrament to do for his people. (75th Question and Answer.)

a. To put us and keep us in remembrance of Christ's love towards us, especially as it is manifested by his death on the cross for our redemption.

When our blessed Lord, at the institution of the supper, uttered the gracious, mandatory words, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke xxii. 19), it was in close connection with his other declarations, "This is my body which is given [broken the apostle has it] for you," and, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." So the apostle: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." It is essential to our Christian faith that we recognize the doctrines of Christ's person, as the only-begotten Son of God incarnate, as our brother-man, and, also, that we consider that the vicarious work of Christ, through the merits

of which we are saved, covered his whole life on earth : yet our redemption was not accomplished until he actually died on the cross. The shedding of his blood, the going out of his precious life there, was the act which gave value and consecration and acceptance to all that he had done and suffered before. That, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, was "the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified" (x. 29), and by virtue of which satisfying the law in room of our death, he rose from the dead (xiii. 20). Hence, "the death of Christ," "the blood of Christ," "the cross of Christ," each is used in Scripture as synonymous with the whole work of Christ on earth for our salvation ; and, therefore, as our church says in her form for this sacrament, "we see that" our Lord "directs our faith and trust to his perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross, as to the only ground and foundation of our salvation." The whole action and administration of the sacrament, the exhibition of the elements, the breaking of the bread and the extension of the wine, prove the same thing. Whatever other thoughts, edifying and comforting and hortatory to a Christian life, we may have in our minds, the main thought, and that which gives validity and meaning to all, is a faithful remembrance of Christ's death on the cross ; and the sacrament is perverted and abused from its purpose when the death of Christ on the cross is not made the special theme of our meditations and object of our faith. Not to use the sacrament for this its ordained end, is a crime against its authority, which cannot be too heavily censured.

Our blessed Lord, mercifully mindful of our infirmities, our temptations within and without, our liableness

to err, especially in self-righteousness and the pride of a carnal ingenuity, which substitute other grounds for our salvation, appointed this sacrament to remind us continually of his death on the cross as our only hope. However at other times we may forget his love and gracious authority in the cares or pleasures of the world and the flesh, the sacrament, which exhibits Christ's devoted love by lifting him up on his cross, as it were, before our very eyes, rebukes our ingratitude, and generously persuades us to live only for him. However at other times we may have listened to the voice of the tempter, teaching any other way of salvation, in whole or in part, than the expiation of Christ's blood, the sacrament, by its simple and direct preaching, brings us back, humbled and thankful, to the foot of the cross. However we may have suffered from the sophisms of a base expediency, the doctrines of the cross to be for a time ignored and thrust on one side to give place to some man-invented scheme for carrying on the work of the Lord in the conquest of the evil that is in the world, the sacrament, by making the gospel of Christ's death "the wisdom of God," and "the power of God" "unto salvation," rebukes our miserable policy as sin against the very essence of Christianity, and refutes it as folly in the light of God's omniscience. In a word, the sacrament, rightly administered and received, is a full though brief compend of all the religion which Christianity teaches and enjoins; the most eloquent enunciation which God has given of what we are to believe and trust in and do, as his servants and children, through Christ; and the most clear, palpable refutation of all error in doctrine and practice, which the subtlety of the devil and the pride of human reason have en-

deavored to foist upon the gospel of God, and the church of his anointed.

To this end, the peculiar action, or, if I may be allowed the expression, the scenic arrangement of the sacrament, were devised by the holy, merciful wisdom of God. The divine Creator, in none of his dealings with the church, overlooks the fact of man's double nature, corporeal as well as spiritual. The very incarnation of our Lord has a reference to this ; and our adoption into the family of God, as human sinners saved by grace, is not complete until we shall at the last day be received, body and soul, into the kingdom on high, where JESUS, the incarnate Son of God, has for us entered, as the assurance that his people shall all be received there and be made like to him, — not only their minds and hearts like him in holy wisdom and love, but their bodies also transfigured into a likeness of his most glorious body. There we shall see him, hear him, sing to him, serve him, not only as we now perceive him by spiritual apprehension, but really with the senses and faculties of our bodies ; yes, as really as the disciples, enjoying his presence on earth, heard his articulate voice, saw and looked upon his mortal person, and handled his palpable form ; though with incomparably greater recognition of his gracious, adorable beauty and majesty and love, as he sits upon the throne of his Father, equal with God, beaming forth a brother's sympathy with our joy in him, even as when, in our sorrows, he revealed his sympathy with our needs.

The weakness of our minds, and the disorder of our bodies, in consequence of sin, expose us to much temptation from our lower nature, so that Paul complained of his incorporated state as a bondage and captivity,

crying out in his distress : " O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " But, on the other hand, our corporeal faculties are of great use to us here in exciting, assisting, and obeying the Christian purposes of our souls. God, therefore, even while stripping from the simple truth the various visible, or, as the apostle calls them, " carnal ordinances " of the Levitical ritual, did not overlook the relation of the soul to the bodily senses, but ordained the visible sacraments, in each of which the spiritual thought is represented by a lively figure : in baptism, the cleansing of Christ's blood by the application of water ; in the Lord's supper, the death of Christ in broken bread and poured-out wine ; and his doctrine, the spiritual food of the Christian, by the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine.

As was said before (twenty-fifth Lord's Day), these palpable ordinances are very simple and few, to prevent our being led into formality and superstition ; but, at the same time, they are most eloquently expressed. Thus, the celebration of the Lord's supper in a right manner and in a right spirit, that is, when we " discern the Lord's body " as represented by the elements, has always been found to be a great strengthener of our faith and incitement of our zeal. It brings us into the very presence of Christ, around his table, and among his brethren, to receive the grace he has promised to bestow. We behold him crucified before our eyes, and know that we derive our life and the joy of life from the offering of his body and the shedding of his blood. We feel that we are one with him and one with each member of " his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all " ; and, looking forward to

the blessed day when he, who was crucified and rose from the dead, shall come again to receive his people where he is in glory, we anticipate the blessed, consummate joy of sitting down with the church of all ages at the marriage supper of the Lamb in the upper sanctuary, amidst the holy perfections of the eternal Sabbath. Any attempt to add anything to the simplicity of the rite as Christ ordained it, is not only to impair its validity, and dishonor the wisdom of its institutor, but also to degrade and pervert it. If we are not edified by the rite as our Lord ordained it, no invention of man can improve it for us.

b. Again ; it was the wise purpose of Christ to establish on earth a visible church which should be the outward form of his spiritual church. As he exhibited his power, his wisdom, his holy virtue, and compassionate grace before the world in his mortal life, so it is his will that his people should openly follow his blessed example, declaring his truth as their trust, and vindicating the divine energy of his saving grace by their Christ-like lives. For this end it was necessary that those who profess his religion should be visibly separated from the world, and, by appropriate, significant, public services, declare the doctrines and obligations of their faith. Hence baptism, or the washing away of sin, is the entrance of the sinner to the church ; and the participation of the Lord's supper, by the assembled church, is their avowal of themselves as his family, and their exhibition to the world of the gospel of the cross as the only hope of their salvation, and the only nutriment of their spiritual life. It is a frequent repetition, and with greater fulness, of the confession they made in baptism before the church and the world. Hence the use of the

Lord's supper is not for the communicant's own personal benefit only, though that is largely found in the service, but for the benefit of the church, in the assurance of his fellowship with all her members, and for the benefit of the world, in his testimony from experience of the grace of Christ and the truth of the gospel. God, therefore, by the sacrament means to give us the great advantage of Christian fellowship, the honor of being witnesses for him before the world, the dignity and reward of being fellow-workers with Christ in the accomplishment of his merciful dominion over the whole earth.

c. God purposes, by this sacrament, to remind us of his gracious willingness to maintain and support our Christian life by the power of the Holy Ghost through the truths therein signified. As the disciple says in the Catechism : " He feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and cup of the Lord as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ."

So in the 19th Question and Answer : " Christ speaks thus [*i. e.* calls the bread his body and the cup his blood] not without great reason, namely . . . to teach us, that, as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life."

Our blessed Lord, after his miracle of feeding the multitude with five barley loaves and two small fishes, as a parable of his power and willingness to meet the wants of all those who trust in him, was followed by many people anxious to share the benefits, not of his teaching, but of his temporal bounty ; to whom he said :

“Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.” A little afterwards he says: “I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” From this it is plain that he speaks of his truth, or his doctrine, as the true bread of the Christian life, which endureth forever; and, also, that the manner of partaking of that spiritual food is by going unto him and believing on him, for personal faith in Christ is the only way by which we can receive sanctifying grace unto our souls. He is, however, yet more particular, for he again adds: “I am the living [spiritual or eternal] bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” The Jews were astonished at this, and, supposing that his language was to be taken literally, asked wonderingly, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” To which he answered (as he did to Nicodemus when he asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”) by repeating the assertion more strongly: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.” The disciples

themselves secretly murmured at this, and said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear [or receive] it?" To which the Master replied: "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." From all which it is evident, that it is especially the doctrine of his passion and death for us which is the food and drink of the Christian soul, assuring him of his oneness with Christ and of the resurrection of his body at the last day to enjoy the life and immortality which are brought to light by the gospel; and, also, that this benefit is confirmed unto us by no carnal participation of mere material elements signifying Christ's body and blood, for "the flesh profiteth nothing," and "it is the Spirit that quickeneth"; but that "the words," or the truths which he speaks concerning his incarnation and death for us, when received into our souls by an intelligent, appropriating faith, become our true meat and drink of life eternal.

The parallel between these passages in the sixth chapter of John and those giving the institution of the supper, is so obvious that we believe none deny it; and, if so, our Lord's commentary on his own words in the one case serves equally well for the other. Our church, from this, rightly infers, that the sacrament signifies, by the elements and our participation of them, our spiritual nourishment, or the religious life of our souls received by faith in the spiritual doctrines, which are thereby set forth and illustrated. We, therefore, deny and reject the abominable heresy of the Papists, who insist that our Lord's words must be taken literally

and that the bread actually becomes the body of our Lord and the wine his blood ; for, says the Catechism (78th Question and Answer) : “ As the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God ; so the bread in the Lord’s supper is not changed into the very body of Christ, though, agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments, it is called the body of Christ Jesus.” Even if the abhorrent idea were true and the bread and wine were so changed, our eating and drinking of them could not, our Lord being witness, profit us anything. “ The flesh profiteth nothing,” he himself says in reference to his own assertion of the bread and the wine being his body and blood ; “ the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life ” ; which is equivalent to what he said before : “ I am the bread of life ; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

But on this point we shall be required to dwell with greater particularity, when we come to consider what our church teaches in the 80th Question and Answer of the Catechism.

Now let us learn of God by this sacrament, that not only at the beginning of our Christian life we are brought into his kingdom by faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of our sins (which is shown in baptism), but that we continually need the grace of the Holy Ghost through the truth to maintain in our hearts the principles, and in our lives the practice, of the holy religion which we profess. As the Israelites were fed in the wilderness by manna from heaven, and drank the water from the rock, and only in the strength they

derived from that bread and water they were able to continue their pilgrimage to the promised land, so the Christian draws all his ability to follow Christ, "walking as he also walked," to heaven, from the doctrines of Christ's incarnation and death.

So, also, is this sacrament often repeated to remind us at once of our continual need and his continual willingness to supply our wants. We are to go in the strength of one Lord's supper unto another, and so "from strength unto strength," until we "appear before God in Zion," the heavenly Jerusalem. This is the meaning of the apostle when he says, "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come;" for until he comes and takes them unto himself in glory, his followers will need the nourishment of soul, which can be drawn only from faith in his body broken and his blood shed for us, the warrant and assurance of our eternal redemption.

Nor is it only while we are at the Lord's table that such blessing is extended and received. We are to keep the feast "in remembrance of him." The celebration is to prevent our forgetting him, to quicken our thoughts of him, and so to pervade our minds at all times with those blessed doctrines in whose strength we go forward. It were strange perversion of the sacrament to allow ourselves in the ungodly thought, that, because we are to remember Christ's death in the celebration, we may cease to remember it during the intervals of its occurrence. No, believers, the Christian should be conscious of a continual crucifixion of Christ, a continual feeding on his precious body and blood, a continual strength derived by faith from his gracious work and promises. We should "desire to

know nothing else save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

d. There is another doctrine which God in the Lord's supper proposes for the confirmation of our trust in him: The incorporation of the believer with the body of Christ.

This the Catechism asserts and explains in the 76th Question and Answer: where we learn that "to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ" is . . . "to become more and more united to his sacred body by the Holy Ghost," who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are, notwithstanding, "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone"; and that "we live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul." Again, in the 79th Question and Answer: "Christ speaks thus, [*i. e.* calls the bread his body and the cup his blood,] . . . more especially by these visible signs and pledges, to assure us that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him, and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God."

When our blessed Lord assumed our human nature, he condescended to represent in his sacred person all true believers, even his church which he redeemed by his most precious blood. As the great sacrifice of atonement, under the Levitical law, was substituted for the people, whose sins were laid on its head, so, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he represented us in the expiation. The typical victim perished

wholly, because it could not take away sin ; but our Redeemer rose again from the dead, because his death was a complete satisfaction of the law for his people, and his mediatorial person, with its entire humanity, body and soul, entered heaven, as our forerunner, and sat down at the right hand of God. In the Lord's supper we show forth his death, and the elements symbolize to us his crucified body and shed blood. But we "show the Lord's death till he come." While, therefore, we remember a crucified Saviour, we declare our trust in a living Saviour, who rose from the grave to complete our redemption by his intercession, authority, and grace ; as the apostle says : " If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The representation of his people is as true and perfect in his resurrection and glory as it was in his death and shame. The sacrament shows him to us in both aspects, that is to say, in his sacrifice for our sins, and in his glory as our head.

The feast of the Paschal Lamb commemorated the *complete* deliverance of Israel from Egypt, therefore all Israel were permitted and enjoined to partake of the flesh, which was forbidden to them in the case of the sacrifices of *imperfect* expiation. They were commanded to eat of the Paschal Lamb, because they shared in the salvation it commemorated ; they were forbidden to eat of the other victims, because their sins were yet in the flesh of them. The true passover having been sacrificed for us, no victim of blood could afterward be offered, so our Lord substituted bread as the emblem of his body ; and as we live by his doctrine, through the grace of our reigning Intercessor, so the bread, which

broken represents his expiation for us on the cross, also, as the emblem of nourishment, represents our nourishment and strength unto eternal life.

When, therefore, we partake of the sacramental emblems, we make a double profession, of union to him in his death, and union to him in his glorified life. Our church, in her communion service, declares this : “ For by his death he hath taken away the cause of our eternal death and misery, namely, sin, and obtained for us the quickening Spirit, that we, by the same (which dwelleth in Christ as in the head, and in us as his members), might have true communion with him, and be made partakers of life eternal, righteousness, and glory.” This intimate union with Christ is described by very strong language in the New Testament Scriptures. Every believer is a member of Christ’s body, and the aggregate church is the body of Christ, he being its divine head. “ Now,” says the apostle, “ ye are the body of Christ and members in particular ” ; and again, he is “ head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” We become thus united to him by faith ; and every one who believes in him, that is, accepts and relies upon his mediatorial suretyship, is a member of “ his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.”

Our eating and drinking of the sacramental emblems strikingly and naturally illustrate this participation of Christ’s body and union with it. We receive (as the Catechism says) with the mouths of our bodies these holy signs. They are thus incorporated with us, Christ (symbolically) enters into us, and makes us one with him : one with him in his sufferings ; one with him in the glory which has followed the sufferings.

We partake of his true body and blood, not in a gross or carnal sense, for it is by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, spiritually through faith ; yet we are by the sacrament assured that we were actually represented by his true personal body on the cross, and are now represented by his glorified body in heaven. As he, by his vicarious expiation, took away the cause of death, which was sin, and we through him receive pardon, so he, having been accepted for us by the Father, derives from the Father life for his people, even the grace of the Holy Ghost, and we live by that life which is in him as our head. So the apostle Paul : “ I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Thus each believer becoming a member of Christ, the whole church is his body, animated in all its members by the same life which is in him, the divine head, even the Holy Ghost which is the Spirit of Christ. We are, therefore, made certain that Christ’s love and care of his church, and of each particular member of it, is constant, close, and personal. He loves his church as his own body ; its safety and its glory is identical with his own. So the apostle : “ No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as our Lord the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” The gracious wisdom of God could go no farther in asserting the full salvation of all who, by a true faith, are united unto Christ.

It follows immediately from this, that, being united to

Christ, we are, by the same act of faith, united to his true church, which is his body, and to each of all the members of his church. We have one life, one hope, one strength, one nourishment, with them. Their interest is our interest, their growth our growth; our interest their interest, our growth their growth. So our Church, in her communion service: "We by the same spirit may also be united as members of one body in true brotherly love, as the holy apostle saith: 'For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, and out of many berries, being pressed together, one wine floweth and mixeth itself together, so shall we all, who by a true faith are engrafted into Christ, be altogether [all together] one body, through brotherly love, for Christ's sake, our beloved Saviour, who hath so exceedingly loved us; and not only show this in word, but in very deed towards one another." So again the apostle: "Holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Coloss. ii. 19); and in the parallel passage of the twin epistle: "Speaking the truth in love, [we may] grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephes. iv. 15, 16).

LECTURE XXXVII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE.

(COMPLETED.)



TWENTY-EIGHTH AND TWENTY-NINTH LORD'S DAYS.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SECOND LECTURE. (*Completed.*)

HAVING considered what God proposes to do for his people in the Lord's supper, we now should learn

2. What he requires us to do for ourselves and for him in our use of the sacrament.

The highest glory of God in Christ is the full salvation of his people from death and from sin. All the economy of grace is arranged and maintained for that divine end. Hence, whatever we are enabled by the grace of the Holy Ghost to do for our own souls, or those of our fellow-sinners, in our use of the sacrament, is done for God, and, for the same reason, the duties required must correspond to the benefits intended. Thus, (*a*,) we have seen that the main purpose of God in the sacrament is to put us and keep us in remembrance of Christ's love towards us, especially as it is manifested by his death on the cross for our redemption. It follows, therefore, from the analogy of faith, that a cordial apprehension of the love of Christ crucified will have the strongest effect in awakening and in increasing our love to Christ; and as his love towards us moved him to die for our salvation, so our love towards him will constrain us to live for his glory. No obedience that we may attempt to render him will

be sincere or acceptable, except as it flows from our love to him, and, therefore, by the most generous of all arguments, his undeserved, devoted, self-sacrificing love for us, he would in the sacrament persuade us to follow in his steps. Such being the purpose of God, we should conform ourselves to it, by fixing our contemplations on Christ and his cross: on Christ as our Saviour, on his cross as the cardinal means of our redemption. We are to contemplate his person as the infinite, only-begotten Son of God, incarnate, that, by the sacrifice of his flesh and blood, he might be our Redeemer. We are to contemplate him as the Lamb of God bearing our sins, and put to a sorrowful, painful, shameful death, because he undertook to answer and atone for our sins. We are to contemplate him rising again from the dead by the will of the Father, whom it pleased "to bruise him and put him to grief," because the infinite merits of his expiation fully satisfied the law for us, and entitled him, by virtue of the covenant, to his stipulated reward, even the consummate salvation of all who trust in his suretyship. We are to contemplate him on the throne at the right hand of the Father, in his once crucified but now glorified person, administering the providence of nature and of grace, for the full accomplishment of all his merciful designs toward his church which is his body. We are to contemplate his coming to judge the world at the last day, to vindicate his people, and to receive them to himself in his everlasting glory, where our eternity shall be filled with the grateful memory and thankful enjoyment of his unspeakable love. All this is in the sacrament in which we "show the Lord's death till he come." Thus, as we see the great love of him against whom we have

sinned, our hearts will be moved to the source of a true repentance ; and as we see the greatness of the sacrifice which alone could redeem us, we shall be humbled from a sense of our utter unworthiness, while we rely with assured confidence on his mightiness to save ; and as we see the infinite power and wisdom he gives to the care of his church and of his glory on earth, we shall be stirred up and strengthened to devote all our faculties of mind and heart and life to the same glorious purpose ; and as we gaze in faith and hope on the future revelations of eternity, the misery of the eternal hell from which he redeems us, the holy raptures of the eternal heaven to which he will exalt us, the motives of the world to come will lift us above the attractive temptations and malignant oppositions of the present time, until, having our conversation in heaven, our fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, our companionship with the innumerable angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, we shall be “ more than conquerors ” over “ the world, the flesh, and the devil,” “ through him that loved us.”

Whether, therefore, we consider our own salvation, or our calling to advance the glory of God in our salvation, it is our main and highest duty, in the use of the sacrament, to remind ourselves of Christ's love for us, especially in his death on the cross. To this should all our thoughts be directed, not only as we actually partake of the elements, but when we prepare for the sacred festival, or go from the blessed table to the active service of a Christian life ; for only as our minds are full of thoughts of Christ, will our hearts be full of the love of Christ ; and only as our hearts are full of his love, will our lives be to his praise.

b. God, by the sacraments, intends to mark the separation of his church from the world ; therefore is it our duty, in the sacrament of the supper, openly before the world and the church to profess our faith in his gospel, and to declare ourselves his disciples, his servants, and his children, as we were set apart to be by our holy baptism. Such an open confession of his authority and profession of his service is due to God. The testimony and obedience of his people is the method by which he receives glory on earth. As, when our Lord was proclaiming his gospel, he proved his divine mission by miracles, healing the effects of sin on the bodies of men, so, now that he is in heaven, he demonstrates the grace of his Holy Spirit through the gospel, by its transforming influence on character and life. If, from our personal experience, we know that there is a vital power in Christianity to supply the motives and strength of a better virtue than we could learn or maintain from any other source, the credit should be given where it belongs ; and, even though from our sinful weakness we come far short of a proper Christian example, we should give our devout approval of the principles which the gospel asserts and the practice it enjoins. The world is full of God's enemies, who deny the reality of religion, and revile its doctrines with its morals ; his friends, therefore, should not conceal themselves, but come out honestly and resolutely on his side. Hence he declares such a confession of faith to be necessary on our part : " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made

unto salvation." The confession is vain and hypocritical, if there be not faith in the heart ; but if the faith be in the heart, there will be an open confession that God may be glorified. " For it is written, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," or " put to flight." True faith will never be deterred by fear of the world from avowing itself. So our Lord : " Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words [doctrines], of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels ;" and again : " Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God ; and he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." How can they who will not avow Christ before his enemies hope to be honored by him before his friends ?

It is, also, the uniform method of God in Christ to employ the agency of believers, individually and collectively, for the advancement of his religion. Hence they are called, as we have seen, his " witnesses," his " fellow-workers," his " soldiers " ; and the church is a disciplined " host," or an " army with banners," of which he is " the captain." It is, then, necessary that they should be known, not only to him who reads the heart, but to their fellow-Christians and to the world. There is a great work to be done, and a great fight to be maintained ; therefore should they avow their mutual sympathy, be ready to unite in their efforts, and together present themselves to the eyes of men. Besides, a man who conceals his sentiments and purposes is never true to them. The secret man must disguise himself, but the honest man is frank and candid.

When we hide our religion from others, we cannot act it out, but will waver and deny it, as did Peter in the high priest's house. When we fairly take our stand, our very self-respect and consistency will go far, by the grace of God, to make us firm and zealous. Hence our Lord says: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." We should be as plainly known to be Christ's disciples, as though the cross were on our shoulders and we were following the Master's living person. The early church disowned as recusants all who did not avow themselves to be Christians, though in the face of persecutions, tortures, and death. Then the confessor of Christ was second in rank to the martyr; and there is the same reason for our open confession now. He must be conscious of cowardice who is, notwithstanding his convictions, hidden among the crowd of Christ's enemies: he will prove himself faithless when he is tried.

Therefore should we regard the sacrament as an ordained means, the principal ordained opportunity, of avowing ourselves Christians, to our fellow-Christians and to the world. In taking our places among the communicants, we should take our places among Christ's friends, followers, servants, witnesses, and soldiers, ready to join his people in every good work for his glory, the advancement of his church, and the salvation of sinners. We there put our hand to the plough not to look back. We assume our stand to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

c. The work before us is arduous, our weakness is extreme, our temptations are great, and we are to grow from the littleness of "new-born babes" to the "full

stature" of adults in Christ Jesus. Hence, God in the sacrament assures us of his divine strength, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, through the doctrines of the cross. This is the significance of the bread and the wine. Christ is the life of the believer, not only in giving him life by his vicarious death, but in maintaining his Christian life by the truth. It is, as we have seen, the doctrine of the cross which is the main support of our faith and zeal. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." So our Lord compares himself, or the doctrine of his person and his passion, to the manna of the wilderness. As the Israelites drank of the water from the rock, and ate of the bread from heaven, living in the strength derived from them until they reached the promised land, so only from his doctrines can we derive by faith the vigor and growth of our piety until the end, in heaven.

We should, therefore, go to the holy table, as to a supply of spiritual food and drink, to restore our fainting powers, to cheer our trembling hearts, and to acquire courage and vigor, that we may go on toward the consummation of our rest in the fulness of Christ's glory. It should be to us, not merely the comfort of the moment, but as a healthful meal, partaken of with the keenness of hunger and thirst, to animate us for future and more determined labors. Except we propose to ourselves the subsequent labor, we have no right to the heavenly food. "The workman" only "is worthy of his meat." They who have been most dil-

igent in working for Christ, have the best relish of the sacrament, because their work has stimulated their appetite; they who most ardently aspire to increasing service, will have the best blessing on their share of the feast, because God will strengthen his willing servant.

d. The sacrament is a vivid representation of Christ's body, to which all believers are vitally and indissolubly united; therefore is it our duty, as well as our privilege, to lay hold for ourselves of the blessed truth. It is no presumption, but an obedient trust in God's grace, for the penitent sinner to believe himself actually united to Christ,—so intimately united as to be crucified with him, quickened with him, assured of glory with him. It is only from this close appropriation of Christ's suretyship, that we can be made certain of pardon, of grace, and of heaven. Such acts of faith must accompany our receiving into our mouths our portion of the elements, or we do not receive their spiritual benefits which God offers.

The blessed effects of such faith on the soul cannot sufficiently be estimated. It answers all our doubts of mercy; for whatever be our guilt, Christ has taken it all away, when, uniting us to his person on the cross, he for us and we in him satisfied the law and died under its penalty. It answers all our fears from our own weakness, because we, by the same spirit which quickened him from the dead, rise with him into a new life, given by God and maintained in us, as Christ lived, accepted, justified, and sanctified. It answers all our hesitations in drawing near to God and asking a full supply of all we need, because Christ our head sits on the throne of grace, and has received without measure

the Holy Ghost for his body, even as the abundant oil, poured on the head of the high priest, descended over his whole person, "even to the skirts of his garments." It answers all our questions for the future, because, certainly as Christ's glory followed his sufferings, they who were united with him on his cross shall be united to him on his throne. It will make us reverent and devout, for how holy should they be who are members of Christ's body! How shameful a thing to pollute his sacred person! It will make us zealous in good works, because, when on our earth, he was zealous, and they who say they "abide in him" ought themselves to walk even as he also walked. How can we represent our Head, or how feel that the life which is in him is in us, except we do as he did, and obey his will as the body obeys the spirit. It will inspire us with long-suffering charity for our fellow-sinners, whom he pities so much, and bears with so patiently, and invites so tenderly, and is ready to receive so graciously. It will unite us in closest sympathy with our fellow-Christians dear to Christ, and enjoying his sympathy as members of the body he has redeemed, banishing from our hearts all quarrel and schism and envy and jealousy, making us ardently desirous of their growth in grace, because as they prosper we prosper, and as we prosper they prosper. And it will fill our souls with fervent aspiring expectations of our final victory and consummate bliss, drawing our affections from things on earth to things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, preparing places of honor and bliss and light, and safe eternal rest; where hope, often wearied here, shall fold her wings to gaze on the rainbow about the throne; and faith put off her sword and buckler to strike

the golden harp of triumph ; and love, satisfied with love, the love of the saints, the love of the angels, the love of Christ, the love of the Holy Ghost, the love of the Father, transfigure the happy, holy, exulting, thankful church from glory to glory.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

VOL II

21



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4

THIRTIETH LORD'S DAY.

AGAINST TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

QUEST. LXXX. *What difference is there between the Lord's supper and the Popish mass.*

ANS. The Lord's supper testifies to us that we have a full pardon of all sin by the only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself has once accomplished on the cross; and that we by the Holy Ghost are ingrafted into Christ, who according to his human nature is now not on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God his Father, and will there be worshipped by us: — but the mass teacheth, that the living and the dead have not the pardon of their sins through the sufferings of Christ, unless Christ is also daily offered for them by the priests; and, further, that Christ is bodily under the form of bread and wine, and, therefore, is to be worshipped in them; so that the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.

HAVING, in our expositions of the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth Lord's days, discussed at length the nature and purpose of the Lord's supper, we need not now to dwell upon what is stated in the first part of the 80th Answer, but may give our whole attention to the extraordinary absurdity and idolatrous wickedness of the doctrine taught by the Papists, respecting the conversion of the bread and wine of the eucharist into the actual body and blood of our Lord, which they term transubstantiation, and also the offering of that bread and wine as a propitiatory sacrifice in the mass.

Let not any object to our proposed discourse as unnecessary, because the Papist belief is not worthy of serious refutation before a Protestant assembly: for,

let it be remembered, that, a short time before the composition of our Catechism, the views we would condemn were held by nearly the whole of Christendom, and that they prevail over the larger part of it at the present time. The glorious Reformation, which, by making the simple Scriptures of God our only rule of faith and practice, greatly impaired the influence of opinions derived from decrees of councils and asserted through doubtful tradition, has not accomplished a complete victory ; as we see in the dominance of the Papal system at this day ; nor are we without painful proof that, while many are coming out from that region of the shadow of death into the purer light, there are those so weak in their religious judgment and conscience as to leave the open Bible, with its spiritual teachings, for the cunningly devised fables of a gross, carnal superstition. Therefore our church commands her ministers publicly to refute, from Scripture and the analogy of faith, these mischievous errors, which she will continue to protest against until the head of the old serpent is fatally crushed beneath the foot of our triumphant Lord.

The controversy on the points before us has been waged, as you doubtless know, for many centuries, having enlisted the logic and learning of the keenest, most disciplined minds, Papist and Protestant ; so that it would be utterly impossible to handle, in a brief discourse, matter about which thousands of volumes have been written. Nor will it be necessary. Whatever difficulty they who have been sophisticated and crippled by false education and inveterate bigotry, may find when required to decide upon questions which have been tangled by Jesuitical art, we, who rely only

upon the sword of the Spirit, can easily cut the knot. God's holy word will make all plain to his "little children," who would "keep themselves from idols."

The word *mass* is not to be found in the Scriptures, original or translated; nor was it known in the church for the first four centuries. Its etymology is doubtful, but, among the many attempts to trace its derivation, the one generally received as the most probable is that given by the Romish doctors. May it not be a corruption from *edere*, to eat; *comesa*, *comapa*, an eating together? They say it is a corruption of the Latin word *missa*, and came into use from the sacrament being administered after the non-communicants were sent out of the church by the customary phrase, *Ite, missa est*, — *i. e.* Go, the congregation is dismissed. Strictly speaking, the *mass* signifies the prayers and ceremonies with which the Popish priests precede and accompany the eucharist. In process of time, as the corruption of the church increased, the *mass* came rather to mean the supposed transubstantiation of the elements and the offering of the body and blood of the Lord as a sacrifice for the sins of the living or dead, on whose behalf the service was performed. It would, however, be a wearisome folly for us to recite all the mummary and multifarious formalities prescribed by the highest ecclesiastical authority in the missal or mass-book. We shall take up only what is brought before us in the 80th Question and Answer.

The statement here made of the Popish doctrine has two parts: the *first* concerning the pretended offering of Christ's body and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sins unto God the Father; the *second* concerning the pretended

conversion of the bread and wine of the sacrament into the real body and blood of Christ. But as the first error of the sacrifice properly follows or is dependent upon the second, of transubstantiation, we shall for that reason reverse the order.

I. That the Catechism does not represent the Popish doctrine unfairly, will be seen by reading the confession of the 17th article of the creed, which was established by the council of Trent: "I do likewise profess that in the mass is offered a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly, really, and substantially in the most holy sacrament of the Lord's supper; and that the whole substance of the bread is turned into the body, and the whole substance of the wine is turned into the blood; which change the Catholic church calls transubstantiation." The council of Trent farther stated and established the doctrine of their church in the following articles: 1. If any one denies that there is contained in the most holy sacrament of the altar, truly, really, and substantially the body and the blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, consequently, the entire Christ, — if any one say, that he is contained therein only in a symbol or figure or virtue (grace), let him be accursed. 2. If any one says that there remains in the most holy sacrament of the altar the substance of the bread and wine together with the life and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if he denies that wonderful and miraculous transformation of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood, while there remains only the form (*species*, ap-

pearance) of the bread and wine, which transformation is termed by the Catholic church transubstantiation, let him be accursed. 3. If there be any one who denies that there is contained in the venerable sacrament of the altar under both sorts, and, after division has been performed, under the single parts of both sorts [bread and wine], the whole Christ, let him be accursed. 4. If any one says, that, after consecration has been performed, the body and the blood of Christ is not in the miraculous sacrament of the altar, but that it is only during the tasting and not before or afterwards, and that there is not in the consecrated host [*hostia*, properly victim], or the particles, preserved or remaining after the celebration of the Lord's supper, the true body of the Lord, let him be accursed. 5. If any one says, either that remission of sins be the principal effect of the sacrament of the altar, or that no other results spring from it, let him be accursed. 6. If any one says that the only-begotten Son of God is not to be adored by external worship in the holy sacrament of the altar, and not to be revered with particular solemnity; nor to be carried about in processions, after the praiseworthy and universal usage of the church; nor to be presented publicly to the people; and that those who adore him [that is in the host] are idolaters, let him be accursed. 7. If any one says that it is not permitted to keep the holy eucharist in the pyx, but that it must be distributed immediately after the consecration to the by-standers, or that it is not permitted to bear it reverentially to the sick, let him be accursed. 8. If any one says that the Christ offered in the eucharist is tasted only spiritually, and not sacramentally and really, let him be accursed.

9. If any one denies that all Christian believers of either sex, as soon as they are arrived at years of discretion, are bound, after the command of the holy Catholic church, to communicate, at least on Easter in each year, let him be accursed. 10. If any one denies that it is not permitted to the officiating priest to administer the sacrament to himself, let him be accursed. 11. If any one says that faith alone is a sufficient preparation for the enjoyment of the holy sacrament, let him be accursed.*

Were these not a close translation of the decrees solemnly adopted and issued by the council of Trent, you might well suspect that the statement made by our church was an exaggerated slander on the church of Rome; as it is, your Protestant reason can hardly believe that so large a body of people, professing to acknowledge the Scriptures of divine revelation, really consent to the most remarkable imposition on human credulity that has ever been attempted by designing or fanatical men. But the painstaking particularity with which the council puts forth the preposterous dogma allows no room for charity to plead that they mean otherwise than as they say.

Their doctrine is: 1. That at the moment the priest utters the consecrating words, the whole substance of the bread and wine is changed into the true, real, and substantial body and blood of Christ, containing his spiritual soul and adorable divinity.

2. That, notwithstanding the elements, as presented to our senses, remain to all perception the same as be-

* This translation is copied from the article *Mass* in the "Encyclopædia Americana," to which it was furnished by a Roman Catholic. It is inelegant, but correct.

fore their consecration, only their perceptible accidents remain, but none of their substance, the substance being the body and blood of Christ.

3. That the whole Christ is contained in each part of the sacrament, in that which was the bread and in that which was the wine; and this, also, in each subdivision or particle, however minute, of each of them.

4. That the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ is contained in both parts of the sacrament from the moment of the priest pronouncing the transubstantiating words (*Hoc est corpus meum*), and so long as the elements retain their *species*, or appearance of bread and wine.

5. That the fact of the transubstantiation is in no way dependent on the faith either of the officiating priest or of the participator, but is accomplished solely by the virtue of the words *Hoc est corpus meum*, pronounced by the ordained priest, as prescribed by the ritual.

This whole doctrine the Reformed churches deny and protest against:

1. Because it has no foundation in Holy Scripture.

The Papist asserts that, when our Lord, at the institution of the supper, took bread, and, having broken it, said, "This is my body broken for you," and afterwards took the cup and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," he meant that the bread was actually transubstantiated into his body, and the wine into his blood. The whole controversy, so far as we, who give no heed to mere church authority, are concerned, hinges on this point.

We deny that our Lord intended by the words in question anything more than that the bread and wine

were significant representations of his true body and blood offered on the cross.

Our Lord, adopting the usages of human speech, was accustomed to illustrate spiritual truths by figures ; and to insist upon our taking such blessed words of his literally, would be to make his teachings utterly ridiculous and incomprehensible. Thus, when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again, and Nicodemus, with a Papist-like stupidity, asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" he explained it by giving the spiritual meaning of the new birth. So when he said at another time, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," it is admitted on all hands that the follower of Christ is not required actually to carry a cross on his shoulders, but to bear faithfully the reproach of Christ before the world. He said to Peter : "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church ;" by which the Papists understand that the church is established on the supremacy of Peter, but by no means suppose that Peter's person was transubstantiated into a rock, or that the church rests actually on him. For elsewhere he said unto Peter : "Get thee behind me, Satan ;" which, if the words be taken literally, would be to assert that Peter was changed into Satan, and, therefore, that their church was built on the devil, — a fact, probable enough, but one they would be far from admitting. At the well of Sychar he offered unto the woman "living water," and added, in reply to her wondering question, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "Living water" is running water ;

yet will the Papist assert that our Lord gave the woman running water, or that the Christian's heart is actually an eternal fountain of running water? The Baptist pointed him out to his disciples as the Lamb of God; but was he actually a lamb? or was that word used to declare him the sacrifice appointed for sin? He calls Christians his sheep; are they actually sheep, or only like him in his meekness, and the objects of his peculiar care? He calls himself "the door of the sheep," and "the true vine"; was he transubstantiated into a door or a vine? Each of these assertions are as positive as his saying, "This is my body;" and if this last must be taken literally, so must they all.

In the sixth chapter of John, which is especially relied on by the Papists to prove their dogma, he said, "I am the bread of life;" was he at that moment transubstantiated into bread? Again, he says of himself that he was "the bread that came down from heaven"; did he come down from heaven in the substance of bread? If then, because he said "This is my body," the bread was transubstantiated into his body, it follows that, because he declared himself to be bread, his body was transubstantiated into bread; yet the Papist anathematizes those who do not deny that any substance of bread remains in the host. So again our Lord said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood;" not the *cup*, the *wine* in the cup; and if we must take his words literally, the cup was transubstantiated into his blood, or rather into the new covenant, of which the blood of Christ was the meritorious cause. Into such absurdities does the Papistical rule of understanding our Lord's words literally betray us.

But the apostle Paul, in the tenth and eleventh chap-

ters of 1 Corinthians, in effect denies the transubstantiation of the elements; for he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Again: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Here the first element is called bread, and the second the cup, or wine, *after* what the Papist considers the moment of transubstantiation, that is, the utterance of the formula *Hoc est corpus meum*; because he speaks of the bread broken and both elements partaken of by the communicant. Now, says the council of Trent: "If any one says that there remains in the most holy sacrament of the altar (*i. e.* in the elements) the substance of the bread and wine together with the life and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and "if any one says that, after consecration has been performed, the body and the blood of Christ is not in the miraculous sacrament of the altar, but that this is only during the tasting, neither before nor afterwards, . . . let him be accursed." But the apostle Paul calls the elements bread and wine *after* the consecration and *during* the tasting, therefore the apostle is anathematized. Our Lord himself, after distributing the cup, said, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." This is contrary to the council of Trent. Will they anathematize our Lord? The Papists lay great stress upon our Lord's words in John vi. 53-57: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye

have no life in you," &c. But what does our Lord add to these declarations : " This is that bread which came down from heaven ; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead ; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." Here our Lord himself contradicts the council of Trent by calling his body, of which the communicant is to eat, bread. He adds still further : " It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." What, then, can be clearer than that, when our Lord calls the bread and wine of the sacrament his body and blood, he means that, in receiving these elements, we receive spiritually by faith the blessings purchased by his atonement, and that through such faith we derive life ?

2. The doctrine of transubstantiation is thus opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, which declares that we are saved through faith in the truth of the gospel, and that all external acts are valueless, except so far as they are manifestations of such inward faith. Even were the abhorrent thing possible that we should eat the actual flesh of Christ, and drink his actual blood, it could not benefit or in any way reach our souls, which can be affected only by truths received and held in a spiritual faith. We are not to look for Christ in any corporeal presence on earth, but to " lift up our hearts," or " set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father."

3. The asserted transubstantiation is contrary to reason and the evidence of our senses. This the Papists admit, but assert that it is to be received as a matter of faith ; for with God all things are possible ; and, therefore, when our Lord declares the bread and the wine

to be his body and blood, we are bound to believe him, the testimony of our senses and the judgment of our reason to the contrary notwithstanding. To this we answer, that there are certain things which are impossible with God, because they would be inconsistent with himself. Thus, "it is impossible that God should lie," or that he should deceive, which he must be supposed to do in the case of transubstantiation; for it demands that we should believe a thing which has every accident, quality, or property of bread or wine, to be another thing, the flesh or blood of Christ, when it has no accident, quality, or property of flesh or blood. How do we know any one to be that particular thing, and not any other thing, but by its accidents or qualities or properties? Thus we know bread and wine to be bread and wine by their form, color, taste, and effects. Take these all away from them, and they cease to be bread and wine; nor can that be flesh and blood which has not the particular qualities of flesh and blood, but appears with the particular qualities of bread and wine. In other words, it is no blasphemy to deny that God can make one thing, while its distinctive properties are retained, to be another thing. The Papists' reply to this is, that the substance of the bread and wine is changed, but their properties or perceptible qualities are not changed; and that it is not bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ; not under the form (*species*) of flesh and blood, but under the form (*species*) and with the perceptible qualities of bread and wine. What do we know of substance, except as that undiscernible essence in which the qualities of a thing subsist? Hence we can know of the substance of a thing only by the discernible qualities of that

thing. If we perceive the peculiar qualities of bread and wine, we are compelled by the nature God has given us to believe that they subsist in the substance of bread and wine. If we do not perceive the peculiar qualities of flesh and blood, we cannot believe that the substance of flesh or blood is there ; because the perceptible qualities are the peculiarities by which God orders that we should distinguish things from other things.

But, say they, it is a miracle and a mystery, and must be received by faith, not by corporeal sense or reason. We answer, it is not a miracle, but a contradiction. A miracle is a divine work submitted to the evidence of our senses, as when the water was turned into wine. There was then an actual change of the qualities of the water into the qualities of the wine. Had there been no such change of qualities, there would have been no miracle, because there was no submitting of the work to the senses. So it is not a mystery. A mystery is a fact, the reality of which we know, but the mode of which is above our understanding. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery, because it concerns the mode of God's infinite being. The fact of the subsistence of three divine persons in one God, we know from divine testimony ; but the mode of such subsistence is infinitely above our reason. In transubstantiation, the object is perfectly within our capacity of observation, while the asserted fact is contrary to every rule of evidence by which God requires us to try such facts. Can God contradict himself, by requiring us to believe that which is contrary to what he has taught us to believe ?

'There are other absurdities. The flesh and blood,

or body of Christ, is a human body. A human body is, as to its essence and qualities, finite, and limited to a certain portion of space, that is, it cannot be in two separate places at the same time. Is it, then, possible that one and the same human body can be, at the same moment, in heaven and in earth? nay, in ten thousand different places on earth widely apart?—and that it is infinitely multiplicable, so that each minute particle of what was once bread and wine is its whole self, the actual, perfect body of Christ? Can they avoid the absurdity that there are as many bodies of Christ as there are particles of broken bread, or portions of distributed wine? That the divinity of Christ is everywhere present, we know from its infiniteness; that the humanity of Christ cannot be in more than one place at the same time, we know from its finiteness. The more astute Papists have attempted to meet this by asserting of his body a miraculous or “supernatural” manner of existence, by which, being without extension of parts rendered independent of space, it may be one and the same in many places at once, and whole in every part of the symbols, and not obnoxious to any corporeal contingencies.* What ridiculous self-contradiction! Independent of space, yet occupying space in many places; separate as particles, yet whole in each particle; continuing as a corporeal substance, yet subject to no corporeal contingency! A human body, without any properties of a human body! The fact of our Lord’s human body, or body in all points like our own, having been raised from the dead and translated into glory, is full of comfort to us, because it assures us of his sympathy; but that comfort is all taken away

* Gother, as cited by Fletcher.

when his body ceases to be like a human body, by being freed from corporeal contingencies.

4. The doctrine of transubstantiation is most abhorrent to our moral sensibilities.

There is scarcely anything more shocking than the eating of human flesh or the drinking of human blood. Cannibalism is the most degrading vice of the most brutal savages, and is scarcely resorted to by educated people even in the last extremity of famine. Yet the Papist, when partaking of the sacrament, is required under pain of anathema to believe that he actually breaks with his teeth and swallows the most holy body of our divine Lord, which, under the mumbling of a priest, has been made out of the bread and the wine. There is nothing in the worst rites of heathenism so horrible as this. Nay, the council of Trent teaches that the spiritual soul and proper divinity of our Lord is contained in the sacrament so that we take, with the sacrament, the spiritual soul and divinity of our Lord into our mouths and thence into our bodies.

They contend, also, that the body and blood of the Lord remain in the elements so long, and only so long, as they retain the species or form of bread and wine. Portions of the host may remain in the pyx after the communion, yet continue the body of Christ. But the wafer retaining the properties of the bread, though not its substance, is therefore liable to corruption, by which it is dissolved ; so that corruption is the method by which the miracle (so called) is limited and the body of the Lord destroyed ; even that sacred body of which the Holy Ghost has twice said, it shall not see corruption. The portions that are eaten, each containing the whole Christ, pass into the bodies of the partici-

pants, and then are subject to the process by which all food and drink lose their species and are changed into different substances ; and this process destroys or dissolves the most sacred and glorified body of our divine Lord. These are the disgusting consequences which inevitably result from the desperate perversions of Popery. We adore that one day, which to-morrow is changed into corruption. We adore that at one moment, which in another we eat and swallow.*

Dear brethren, how sad is the superstition, in the honest exposure of which we are compelled to mingle with our most precious thoughts such painfully offensive associations !

This argument will suffice to establish our denial of transubstantiation, and we may be glad that the disagreeable, though necessary, duty is over. We now pass to treat, as proposed in our order, of

II. The oblation of the sacrament as a sacrifice for sin.

The Papist holds that the priest, having instrumentally, by using the words *Hoc est corpus meum*, transubstantiated the elements into the body and blood containing the soul and divinity of our Lord, offers that body and blood, or the whole Christ, as a sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, merit, and expiation to God on behalf of both the dead and the living. It follows, therefore, that if, as we have shown, there be no transubstantiation, there can be no offering of Christ, as pretended, in the mass. Yet we add a few other sug-

* That we have not misstated the Romish views on this subject, may be seen from the fact, that the priest about to officiate and the communicant intending to participate in the sacrament are required to fast from twelve o'clock of the night before, lest any other substance might mingle in their digestion with the host.

gestions in accordance with the teachings of our Catechism.

1. The sacrament cannot, in any proper sense, be a sacrifice, because, according to our Lord's institution of it, it is an ordinance commemorative of his death for our sins, on the cross. "This do," said he, "in remembrance of me." "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," says the apostle, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come." But the mass pretends to be a repetition, not a memorial. Our Lord said not a word of its being a sacrifice to God, but treats it altogether as a service of faith, profitable to our own souls, because it carries back our thoughts to his atonement, made and finished on the cross. So throughout the apostolical writings there is not a word of trust in anything else but the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; whereas the Papist would have us put our reliance on another sacrifice of Christ, as they pretend, in the oblation by the priest. What Christian can allow such a denial of the sufficiency of the great atonement?

2. If Christ enter the sacrament to be offered, it is necessary that he should come from heaven to earth; which is contrary to his own and the apostolical declarations. For our Lord told his disciples that his going away was expedient for them, because, if he went not away, the Comforter would not come; but that he would come again to receive them unto himself in the places he had prepared for them; whence it is clear that his coming is to be at the time he would so take them with him into heaven. He cannot, therefore, come to us personally in the sacrament, and will not until he comes to his final triumph; which the apostle means when he says we "show the Lord's death till he

come.” During the interval between his going away in his ascension, and his return in his great glory, we receive his blessing from the grace of “the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost.” So, also, the writer to the Hebrews makes our “sure and steadfast” hope to enter “within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedek.”

3. The asserted repetition of the sacrifice in the mass is a denial of perfectness or sufficiency in our Lord’s sacrifice of himself on the cross, which is a direct contradiction of apostolical testimony. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews the writer deduces his strongest argument to prove the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over the Levitical from the fact, that, while they needed often to repeat their sacrifices, our Lord offered but one, which was himself. These are his words on this point: “Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, [or, we may add, as the Romish priests,] to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once when he offered up himself.” Again: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered from the foundation of the world; but now, once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and, as it is appointed unto all men

once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them, that look for him, will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Again : " By the which will [the will of God in Christ] we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins : but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God ; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." It was in anticipation of this one perfect and perfecting atoning offering of Christ on the cross that Daniel prophesied : " After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself ; . . . and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." And this also is the meaning of our Lord on the cross, when he said, " It is finished."

4. The Papists, however, contend that the oblation of Christ's body and blood, the whole Christ, in the sacrament, is most pleasing to God. This again is contrary to Scripture, which, in a thousand places, declares that it is faith in Christ's cross which is well pleasing to God ; for, says the Psalmist in his most penitential psalm : " Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it ; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

They, also, attempt to justify their dogma by asserting that, as our Lord was High Priest after the order

of Melchisedek, and Melchisedek “brought forth bread and wine” when he blessed Abram, so Christ must offer a similar bloodless sacrifice of bread and wine, which he did not offer on the cross, and can be said to offer only in the bread and wine of the sacrament. The citation itself defeats them ; for, setting aside the obvious probability that the bread and wine brought forth by Melchisedek were nothing more than refreshments offered by him to Abram, there is either blood in the sacrifice of the mass, or there is not. If there be blood, it is not a sacrifice of bread and wine ; if there be not blood, it is not an expiatory sacrifice, because “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” But if the doctrine of transubstantiation be true, there is both the body and blood of Christ in the mass, and it is, therefore, wholly changed from the bread and wine of Melchisedek’s example ; and they incur the anathema of their chiefest council when they assert it to be a bloodless sacrifice or a sacrifice of bread and wine. They try to evade this by saying that it is in appearance bread and wine. What avail is the mere appearance, when the substance is flesh and blood ?

No, my brethren, we do indeed present an acceptable offering to God, sufficient to cover all our sins, when in our faith we plead the perfect sacrifice of Christ, once offered for us on his cross ; and Jesus is our Melchisedek when he sets before us the holy bread and wine as emblems of his atoning passion.

No reference has been made in our foregoing discussion to the opinions of the church, ancient or modern, because, as protestants, we reject every other rule of faith beside the Scriptures ; but it is fair to add that,

antecedently to the council of Trent, very many Papists, and not the least learned among them, denied the transubstantiation of the mass. Dun Scotus, the great opponent of Aquinas, hesitated not to oppose it with all the vigor of his eminent abilities, in which he was sustained by others less able only than he. Some, who held the doctrine, denied that it was taught in Scripture, contending that it should be received as a dogma of their infallible church.

We learn from the whole subject the danger of departing from the simple word of God, and the simple doctrine of the cross. There is no pitch of absurdity and heresy, even idolatry, that we may not reach if we give ourselves up to the guidance of men, even of a church.

Very thankful should we be that God by his unmerited goodness has not permitted us to be educated in such superstition.

And earnestly should we pray that those, who are now in that region of the shadow of death, the so-called church of Rome, may, by the same grace, be brought to the true light.



LECTURE XXXIX.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS



THIRTY-FIRST LORD'S DAY.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

QUEST. LXXXIII. *What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?*

ANS. The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline, or excommunication out of the Christian church; by these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers.

QUEST. LXXXIV. *How is the kingdom of heaven opened and shut by the preaching of the gospel?*

ANS. Thus: when, according to the command of Christ, it is declared and publicly testified to all and every believer, that whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits; and, on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted; — according to which testimony of the gospel, God will judge them both in this and the life to come.

QUEST. LXXXV. *How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by Christian discipline?*

ANS. Thus: when, according to the command of Christ, those who, under the name of Christians, maintain doctrines or practices inconsistent therewith, and will not, after having been brotherly admonished, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, are complained of to the church, or to those who are thereunto appointed by the church, and if they despise their admonition, are by them forbid the use of the sacraments, whereby they are excluded from the Christian church and by God himself from the kingdom of Christ; and when they promise and show real amendments, are again received as members of Christ and his church.

A SUSPICION has arisen, it is likely, in the minds of some of you who have pursued with us the study of our Catechism, that there are at least a few things treated of with too great particularity, since they are now fairly understood, and the true doctrine concerning them believed by the great body of evangelical

Christians. It should, however, be remembered that the Catechism was written but a short time after our Reformed churches had come out from the idolatrous church (so called) of Rome, and that many of the anti-scriptural dogmas and pretensions of Popery and its ministers retained not a little power over the common mind, accustomed to an entire and unquestioning subjection for many centuries; and this especially, as they were proclaimed and insisted on by the advocates of Rome with all the art and ardor and strength of men skilled in argument and fond of rule, who felt that they were in great danger of losing their authority and its emoluments forever. Doctrines and practices, upon which a well-taught child in a pious family or Sunday-school can now pronounce correctly, were then subjects of angry and protracted dispute between learned and eminent men in halls of universities, and in councils summoned by princely and imperial command; and how partially truth prevailed over error, is shown by the fact that the greater part of Europe fell back from the alarm of controversy to a more servile awe of the monstrous superstition than before. At this hour the adherents to these destructive errors considerably outnumber all others who profess themselves Christians; and as some think sacred prophecy warns us of a desperate attempt again to subjugate the world by the iron yoke of their intolerant supremacy, it is, therefore, not wise for us so to overlook the falsity of such pretensions as to remain ignorant of the scriptural arguments by which they may be refuted, and our Protestant faith intelligently confirmed. These remarks are particularly applicable to the subject of our lesson for to-day.

A key being the instrument by which a door is opened or shut, he who has the key has the power of admitting or excluding. Hence, it is very naturally used as a figure to signify the prerogative of conferring or withholding privileges, as in a state or society. Of this we have a notable, though not solitary, example in Scripture, where our Lord says to the apostle Peter, after his memorable confession, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). It is upon this text, as you know, that the Papists ground their claim for the supreme and infallible dominion of the Pope, as the alleged successor of St. Peter in things spiritual, and, in truth, things temporal so far as they can be made contingent upon the interest of the church over which he presides. Peter, say they, was the rock on which Christ founded the true church. Peter was bishop of Rome; therefore each successive bishop of Rome derives the same fundamental relation to the church, and no one who does not so rest his faith on the authority of Christ so delegated to the Pope is a member of the true church. In like manner they argue, that, as our Lord gave to Peter the authority to admit into his kingdom, which is his church, and to exclude or expel from it, promising to ratify in heaven what the apostle did on earth, binding what he bound, and loosening what he loosed (that is, condemning for sin or absolving from sin), so the bishop of Rome, or Pope, being the successor of Peter, is the vicegerent

of Christ on earth, whose sentences of absolution or condemnation, finally pronounced, have infallible authority in heaven. Now, if we allow their view of the text cited, their inference must be allowed, and we cannot, without fatal disloyalty to Christ, refuse entire subjection to the Pope.

But let us sift this interpretation and argument of theirs. In the first place, it is far from certain, nay, very improbable, that the apostle Peter was ever bishop of Rome. It is even doubted by many learned investigators that he ever was at Rome at all. The traces of his special presidency over the particular church of Rome, if there be any, are exceedingly obscure; whereas, if such stupendous interests depend on the alleged fact, it is fair to believe that God would have put it beyond doubt. Certainly, there is no allusion to anything of the kind in the Scriptures; on the contrary, the care of the church of Rome was presidentially assigned rather to the apostle Paul, as appears from his epistle to that church and his residence there after his appeal to Cæsar. Paul, also, declares that the gospel of circumcision was unto Peter, which implies that his mission was especially to the Jews, while the apostleship of the uncircumcision was committed to himself, that he should go unto the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 7-10), for which reason Paul, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, says: "I speak unto you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office;" from which it would appear that any pretension of Peter to special authority over the Gentile church of Rome was an intrusion within the sphere appointed to the apostle Paul.

But we go farther, and assert, on a collation of

scriptural passages, that, so far from any primacy in the apostleship having been assigned to Peter, whatever prerogatives were given him were given to all the apostles in common. Thus, was Peter a rock on which Christ built his church? So were all, for Paul says (Ephes. ii. 20), that the church was built on "the foundation of the prophets and apostles," "Jesus Christ himself" alone having a far excelling distinction as "the chief corner-stone"; and the apostle John, in the Revelation, describing the church as a city, says that the wall of it "had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles were written" (xxi. 14). Besides, the office of the apostles as the foundation, with the prophets, lay in their inspired testimony of the truth concerning Christ, and therefore ceased when their testimony ceased, so that in this respect the apostles had not, and could not have had, any successor at Rome, or anywhere. If Peter was sent of Christ with power of the keys, that is, to retain or remit sins, so were they all, for our Lord after his resurrection said to them: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 21-23). Thomas, it may be observed, was not then present; but as he was afterwards with the other ten when they received the final and general commission of apostleship, we need not doubt of his having had the same authority as the rest. Nay, Paul was himself the first protestant against the primacy of Peter, when, asserting his prerogative to rule the Corinthian church, he says: "I

suppose [or, I reason] I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5); and on one critical occasion he "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. ii. 11). So shall we withstand any pretended successor of Peter, if he teach any other gospel than that which Paul, our apostle, taught. Peter had this precedency, and no more, that his preaching at the Pentecost was instrumental in adding the first converts from Judaism, and afterwards completing the organization of the Christian church by the addition of the Gentile elements, necessary to "the one new man" in Christ (Gal. ii. 11-16), when he baptized Cornelius (Acts x. xi. 18).

But, as we have hinted before, the apostles had no successors in the full degree of apostleship, nor can the words of the text under consideration be applied in anything like their full sense to any one after them in the church. Our Lord sent his apostles forth as he had been sent by his Father, which was with power on earth to forgive sins, and with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, including power to confer the grace of the Holy Ghost upon others. This commission to them was indicated and attested, as his commission from the Father, by the power of working miracles. Where this seal and evidence is wanting, it is clear that the full commission has not been transmitted by any succession. But as no pope or bishop or priest has this miraculous energy, none of them are fully successors of the apostles. It follows that our Lord's address to Peter, or his subsequent commission to them all, embraced some powers not transmissible, for the exercise of which they were peculiarly fitted. Now, as they were appointed to lay the foundation of the church on

the chief corner-stone, Christ Jesus, and they were governed from within by a peculiar degree of the Holy Ghost, they may very well be supposed to judge infallibly, when necessary, of what was in men, so as to make no error in admitting them to the church or excluding them from it, and in pronouncing, as our Lord did infallibly, the remission or retention of sins. Therefore it was literally true that whatever they, when exercising their apostolical authority, bound on earth, or loosed on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. Christ on his throne would certainly ratify what his Spirit in the apostles did on earth. But the same confirmation cannot be presumed of any uninspired men, claiming to be their successors. Any such claim for them is a blasphemous assumption of Christ's discernment and authority. Hence the assumptions of the Pope to open and shut heaven, and to forgive or retain the guilt of sin, is worse than vanity and arrogance.

But a very urgent question here arises, which our church, professing to declare by the Catechism the full doctrine of Christ, is not at liberty to shun. Was Christian government and, especially, discipline, so restrained in the hands of the apostles, that, after their divinely directed office ceased on earth, it ceased to exist; or, if it continued, to whom was it committed? Volumes of dispute have been written in all ages of the church on these points, and with every variety of opinion; but all the inquiries properly refer for consideration in the premises to that striking passage in Matthew, (xviii. 15–20,) where our Lord, speaking of quarrels between brethren, and having enjoined first private and gentle methods of attempting reconciliation, adds: "Tell it unto the church, and if he (the other party in the case)

neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven [the identical words, with the exception that the singular pronoun is changed to the plural, showing that the promise to Peter was not exclusive]. Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." These two verses (19, 20) are evidently parts of the paragraph relating to discipline, and are to be considered in its exposition. We have here, then, three things to settle: First, To whom were these words addressed? Secondly, What is meant by the church? Thirdly, To what extent and in what manner (if any) are these promises applicable beyond the apostles?

As to the address, it will be seen on reference to the chapter that our Lord was speaking to his disciples, or his future apostles (compare Mark ix. 33; Luke ix. 46; xxii. 24-30; John xiii. 12-17), who were under the prejudice of Jewish notions concerning Messiah's kingdom. The commands and the promises, therefore, were primarily to the inspired apostles; and upon this Paul acted in a case of discipline at Corinth (1 Cor. v. 1-5), where, though evidently claiming his apostolical authority, he yet directs the church to proceed to condemnation in his absence, he confirming their decision beforehand: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed;

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together, and *my spirit*, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,* to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." But though the address was primarily to the inspired apostles, we may believe, and in this all parties are agreed, that our Lord, in giving these directions to them as the founders of his church, intended to mark out the principles of action for the church in all ages ; which view is strengthened by the fact of the apostle Paul's association with himself of the church of Corinth in the case cited, as also by the address of the same apostle to the elders of Ephesus (Acts xx. 28), and of the apostle Peter to the elders generally, in both of which they are expected to take faithful care of the church, the oversight (undoubtedly including discipline) of which was committed unto them by the Holy Ghost.

What then is meant by "the church"? Church is a Greek term, and therefore had not been used by the Jews in their polity ; and though under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost it was afterwards given to the flock of Christ, the Christian church was not formally established until after the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Jewish economy being still in force. Under that system we know that ultimate discipline of offenders was in the hands of the assembly of elders, or Sanhedrim, as they called it. Did our Lord refer his immediate disciples to that tribunal? The supposition is not monstrous, since he himself submitted to trial by the Sanhedrim, and protested only against the flagrant illegality

* It may be questioned whether the phrase "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" refers to the whole assembly, or to the spirit of the apostle. I incline to the latter opinion.

of their proceedings. Or did he refer in advance to the future church, in language not understood by the disciples at the time, but which would be understood by that church for whose benefit in all ages his sacred words are recorded? This opinion seems not unreasonable, as our Lord shows a similar anticipation of phraseology when he exhorts his disciples, before they knew that he was to be crucified, to “take up their cross and follow him”; for although that expression probably was in proverbial use among the Jews, it had undoubtedly in our Lord’s mind a force which the whole church has subsequently given it, as sympathy with his death on the cross. We, therefore, hold that the counsel given to tell matters of dispute between Christian brethren, or of offence against the morals of our holy profession, should, when more gentle methods of composition fail, be told to the church, and submitted to them for decision; — not necessarily the whole church, or the whole of a particular church, (for we know that some, and, ordinarily, the larger portion of a church, are forbidden to speak in the church, and so have no voice in the church court,) but, as the Jewish church was represented by the court of elders, and as elders to “rule over” were appointed in the apostolical churches, this function of oversight, or government, may be very well committed to their hands, by which much confusion and unnecessary scandal are avoided; and, therefore, such a system of government and discipline, by a body of elders elected by the members of each church, has been adopted, and prevails in all our Reformed churches.

These points being settled, our third question recurs: To what extent and in what manner are the promises,

primarily directed to the inspired apostles, applicable to the church, since their day, in its exercise of discipline? It is obvious that there must be some restraint of them, if not modification. For the apostles, when under plenary inspiration as the appointed and miraculously accredited ministers of Christ in the absolute government of the church, had such divine discernment and impartiality that their judgment was infallible; and, therefore, Christ certainly confirmed in heaven what they, by his authority and under his guidance, ordered on earth. But, though the grace of the Holy Ghost has been promised, and has been, as it will be, given to all Christians, and Christ has promised to be "in the midst of them," especially when met together in his name, such inspiration is not plenary, or such guidance thorough, as in the case of the apostles. On the contrary, every Christian knows that, from the weakness of his understanding and heart, and the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, he is constantly prone to error, misjudgment, and uncharitableness; nay, that the Holy Ghost does not preserve him from such ignorance and sin, except so far as he purifies his heart and, using all the means of grace, acts in the spirit of Christ, according to the word of Christ, and singly for the glory of Christ. This must also be true of the church or eldership of the church when administering Christian discipline. Christ will confirm in heaven whatever they do in accordance with his word and Spirit; but it is preposterous to say that he will confirm the erroneous or illegal acts of his servants, though they profess to act in his name. There must be, if I may be allowed the technicality, appeal from the fallible court below to the infallible judge

on the throne of heaven. Yet, until that appeal be tried and pronounced upon, it becomes all good Christians to bow before the tribunal constituted by Christ on earth. So far, then, as Christian discipline is administered according to the law of Christ, by the church on earth, it will be confirmed by Christ, the only head of the church, in heaven.

We should here add, by way of cautionary inference, that such prerogative of ministerial judgment, having been committed to the church, as the kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, the jurisdiction of the church is positively restricted to matters purely spiritual, all others being left to extra-ecclesiastical authorities, or what the apostle terms "the powers that be." Our Lord, it will be remembered, refused to settle a matter of inheritance, saying, "Who made me a judge or divider over you?" And when asked to decide a political question, refused to answer farther than to say, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's"; while on another occasion, though privately protesting the right of "the children" to be "free," he wrought a miracle to procure means for the payment of tribute to the foreign oppressor who, in divine providence, held rule over his country. It is, therefore, clearly against the example of our divine head to bring questions of property or temporal politics into church courts. They have no right to adjudicate them.

So, also, Christians, in their private capacity, or otherwise than for the administration of Christian discipline, are debarred from the exercise of open censure or personal condemnation of their brethren, and are liable in attempting such annoyance to condemnation

themselves by him who has said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

But it equally follows that the prerogative of judgment in religious matters belongs to the church alone, and that neither the civil power nor any body of men (not a church) have anything to do with such matters; and if any such presume to take them into their hands, they are guilty of profanely obtruding themselves on the kingdom of Christ. No greater mischiefs have happened to church and to state than have arisen from such unchristian and wicked confusion of things spiritual with things temporal, — things ecclesiastical with things political. In this country, for the first time since history began its records, the providence of God has ordered that constitutional law should unite with the word of God in severing the religion of Christ from the civil government; and it behooves all true disciples of Christ to be very careful how, on their part, they do not transcend their sphere, lest, as will inevitably be the case, they provoke the world to interfere with the rights of the church.

We can now see how and why the section for the present Lord's Day was introduced by the authors of the Catechism, especially as they were so rudely pressed at the time by the advocates of Popery. The Pope, as the successor of St. Peter, claimed supreme and sole dominion over the church, and bore embroidered on his vestments two keys, as the badge of his power. Where, asked the Papists of the Protestants, is the right of ecclesiastical government? Who has the mystical keys which open and shut the kingdom of heaven? To this the Reformers replied, as in the

answers before us : That the right of government was in the church, constituted and governed according to the word of Christ ; and that the two keys were also in the hands of the church : the one, the preaching of the gospel, by which those who believe are made heirs of heaven, and those who refuse to believe are forever excluded from its glorious blessedness ; the other, Christian discipline, which, in excommunicating the gross sinner from the church on earth and in restoring the penitent, if administered according to the word and spirit of Christ, must be according to the will of Christ in heaven. The language and reasoning of the whole section are so very plain that we may leave them without farther comment.

1. How infinitely important it is that the gospel be preached faithfully, purely, and fully ! It is the voice of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, declaring unto sinful men the principles on which the Judge of all will determine our eternal state. Those who come within the sound of the preacher, have a right to hear the gospel as God has sent it ; because their eternal salvation or damnation depends on the manner in which they regard the revelation of mercy. If the preacher be faithful in delivering the message, as an ambassador for Christ, he is free from the blood of all men ; if he be faithless, the blood of his hearers' souls, dying impenitent, God will require at his hands. This thought, but for the assurance of God's grace, would have overwhelmed the apostle Paul ; how should it make his uninspired successors humble, reverent, and zealous ! Hear what he says : " For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish ; to the one we are the savor of death

unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

How vast is the responsibility of those who hear the gospel so proclaimed! Upon their treatment of the word hangs their everlasting condition. Every time the gospel is preached, the gate of heaven is flung open and they are invited to enter; every time they turn away unbelieving, the gate of heaven is shut against them. Dear friends, "take heed how you hear."

2. How important that Christian discipline be faithfully and religiously maintained! The officers of the church are charged to vindicate the character of the Christian name before the world. They are, therefore, bound to disown those whose lives are in open contradiction to the law of God. The duty is difficult, much more so than people are apt to think. The rule of Christ requires at least two witnesses; and as church courts have not the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, trial is often impossible even where the scandal is more than suspected. But so far as in them lies, they are bound in fidelity to Christ, to the offender, and to the world, for an unshrinking, impartial, and merciful discharge of their sacred function.

And all of us should regard such an oversight by the church authority as a blessing, cheerfully yielding ourselves to faithful admonition, and submitting ourselves to the decision of those who are set over us in the Lord, by the paternal love of God and the grace of Christ. Amen.



LECTURE XL.

OF THANKFULNESS.

NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS.



THIRTY-SECOND LORD'S DAY.

OF THANKFULNESS.

QUEST. LXXXVI. *Since, then, we are delivered from our misery, merely of grace, through Christ, without any merit of our own, why must we still do good works ?*

ANS. Because Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit after his own image, that so we may testify, by the whole of our conduct, our gratitude to God for his blessings, and that he may be praised by us ; also, that every man may be assured in himself of his faith by the fruits thereof ; and that by our godly conversation others may be gained to Christ.

QUEST. LXXXVII. *Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted unto God ?*

ANS. By no means ; for the Holy Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like shall inherit the kingdom of God.

THE purpose of religion being to cultivate our sense of obligation to God, and thereby to make us more like our divine Father in the practice of those duties he has enjoined, it follows that no scheme of religious doctrine or worship can be true which has not such effect upon the hearts and lives of all who sincerely receive it. Such evidence of its authenticity, or divine origin, is especially demanded of the Christian religion, which, on the one hand, declares our native inability to serve God aright, and, on the other, offers us the blessedness of his favor for time and eternity only through the merits of Christ in gracious answer to our faith. The original constitution under which man was placed, undoubtedly ordered that he should be rewarded for his own righteousness or punished for his own unrighteous-

ness, — righteousness and unrighteousness being synonymous with obedience and disobedience to God. This is clearly set forth by the apostle Paul (Romans ii. 6–11): “Who [*i. e.* God the Judge] will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, — of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, — to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.” Such a system at once commends itself to our reason. It is right that a man should be treated as he deserves. We can, also, see that the legitimate effect of such a system should be to restrain men from evil and move them to do right. It must, moreover, be unchangeable, because eternal justice, the perfect consistency of God with himself, requires that his favor should be the reward of righteousness only, his wrath the punishment of unrighteousness only. The gospel, so far from abrogating this constitution, vindicates it in every particular. Nay, the sole end of Christ’s mediation was to justify God in taking to himself preëminent glory by the salvation of sinners who believe in Christ. Christ, the second Adam, takes the place of the first, on behalf of all the seed of faith, suffers for them the penalty due their disobedience, renders for them a perfect obedience, — so obtaining for them by the infinite merit of his substitution entire absolution from guilt, and a gracious title to full divine favor.

This is not the place to argue the propriety of vicarious atonement, or the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. God sufficiently demonstrates it in his holy word, and we have rehearsed his demonstration in several lectures already. But it does behoove us to answer the question, how by such an arrangement the repentance of the sinner so saved, his reformation from disobedience to obedience, is brought about? for unless such a change in the sinner, pardoned and blest, be secured, the end of religion is lost, and Christ made, as our apostle expresses it, "a minister of sin." The opponents of the doctrine of free grace, of justification by faith alone, (they are identical, being two forms of expressing the same thing,) press upon us as they think a serious difficulty, as if we took away from before the sinner all motive to do right and abstain from wrong. We and our Reformed church here, out of the word of God, contend in reply, that, so far from taking away our motives to do right, the doctrine of grace not only preserves those which spring from the law, but, also, adds those of a far more influential and more generous character; nay, that, instead of encouraging or even tolerating a wilful practice of sin, the gospel expressly withholds from all wilful transgressors any part in the salvation by Christ. We deny, it is true, that good works have any share in procuring our justification with God but we assert as confidently, that they certainly, because necessarily, follow the justification of the sinner through faith in Christ, or, in other words, that his good works are not offered to merit favor with God, but as evidences of gratitude for his favor already conferred in honor of Christ's merits.

Our Catechism, in its lesson for the first Lord's Day, taught us that there are three things which we must know in order to our enjoyment of the comfort in life and death which the Christian religion alone can give: first, how great our sins and miseries are; secondly, how we may be delivered from all our sins and miseries; and thirdly, how we shall express our gratitude to God for such deliverance. The first and the second we have already treated of at large. We are now to treat of the third, which will embrace all our remaining expositions of the Catechism. For, as Van der Kemp and other commentators on our book have pointed out, this third part of the Catechism has five particulars. I. The necessity of good works (86th and 87th Questions and Answers). II. The principle from which they proceed, *conversion* (88, 89, 90). III. Their nature (91). IV. Their rule, *the law of God* (92–115). V. The means of performing them, *prayer* (116–129). Our subject to-day is —

THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS IN A CHRISTIAN.

This the Catechism argues, in the first place, from the effects of that renewing grace of Christ which always accompanies his pardoning grace; and, secondly, from the testimony of Scripture that none, who continue in wicked lives, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

FIRST: *The effects of that renewing grace of Christ which always accompanies his pardoning grace.*

1. What is this renewing grace?

“Christ, having redeemed and delivered us by his blood, also renews us by his Holy Spirit in his own image.”

The purpose of God in Christ is, undoubtedly, to deliver his people, or all who believe on his name, from

eternal death, which is the just punishment of their sins, and to bring them again into favor with God. But, as has been repeatedly shown, deliverance from punishment is a small part of that salvation. If it went no farther, the mercy shown would be a weakness, which we cannot without great impiety charge upon the Holy One of Israel, — a mere pity for the sinner's sufferings without regard to his character. Where, then, were the use, the authority, or holiness of his law? To show that such is not the case, he not only insists on the repentance of every one who would enter into Christ's kingdom, but, as an article of the covenant with Christ as the Saviour of sinners, he has required that Christ should also be the judge of men at the last day, and then vindicate the justice of mercy by condemning all the impenitent, or all who wilfully lead wicked lives, thereby showing that they have no part in the kingdom of grace.

The Father has given to Christ his people as the reward of his mediatorial righteousness, but on the express condition that they might be "redeemed from all iniquity," and purified as "a peculiar people, zealous of good works"; and so agreeable to the holy Saviour is this condition, that such a change in the sinner was his main purpose in giving himself for us. "Ye are not your own," says the apostle, "for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and spirit which are God's." Nay, this is the covenant which the Saviour himself makes with the true Israel: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." We also know that his name was called "Jesus" (Deliverer), "for he shall save his

peuple from their sins." The texts to the same import are, as you know, very numerous. It was to accomplish this purpose that, after finishing the atonement, he ascended up on high and took his seat at the right hand of God as a "Prince and a Saviour," "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." For this, also, he asks and receives of the Father, and sends down upon his people, the grace of the Holy Ghost, who by his divine power regenerates, converts, enlightens, strengthens, and sanctifies them to the service of God, gradually, but in the end, surely and completely. Thus is Christ made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." The grace of pardon and the grace of sanctification always go together. The sanctification is the sealing of the pardon, and the earnest of the perfect redemption.

Nay, it is impossible in the nature of things that it should be otherwise, for not only from the penal enactments of God, but also from the connection of moral cause and effect, misery must follow wilful, unrepented sin. Christ could not, (we speak it with reverence,) so long as the holy God is the blessed God, save from misery those who choose to go on in the ways of wickedness, because they will not use the only means of happiness. In or out of Christ, there is no peace, there can be no peace, for the wicked.

Besides, the believer by the very terms of the redemption is united to Christ; he is made one with him as his representative; and the union with Christ is so vital and personal, that the Holy Spirit which is in Christ the head, lives and reigns in all his members. Therefore, as the Catechism asserts, he is renewed after Christ's own image. That image, or likeness of Christ,

is the seal of the Spirit by which he stamps the believer's soul as belonging to Christ. So, for the believer, to live, is Christ; he lives in Christ, with Christ, to Christ, for Christ. Christ is formed in him, — "Christ in you, the hope of glory." So invariably is this the case, that "if any man have not the spirit of Christ," which is the spirit of holy obedience and filial love, "he is none of his."

2. *a.* This grace of the Spirit does not operate in us as a mere force or impulse, but morally, that is, according to the laws by which moral creatures are governed. Hence, the most lively gratitude is awakened in the soul towards God for our redemption from eternal death and the restoration of the divine favor by the work of Christ. The believer, conscious of these infinite and inestimable blessings, asks, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" The salvation has been all of grace, — for Christ's sake, without any merit of ours; and, for the same reason, nothing that we can do for God can in any degree be a repayment of his kindness. God, who has given us all, needs not anything at our hands. Still, and so much the more, the believer is ardently desirous of testifying his thankfulness by more than feeling or words. What then will be most acceptable to God? What is it he most delights to see in his children? With what is he most pleased in his Son as our Surety, and for the sake of which he has given us all these blessings? It is obedience, the honor done to his holy law, the reflection of his holiness in the life of his servants. This, then, is the thank-offering we are to render him. Our whole conduct is to testify by its submission to his will and the doing of his commands how strong, stronger

than any other motive, is our sense of his loving-kindness. Thus the apostle, in the Epistle to the Romans, after having demonstrated the freeness and the fulness of salvation by Christ, opens the practical application of the doctrine in these words: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [that is, our whole conduct while in the body] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." So, also, we read that true "faith worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6); that he purifieth the hearts of his people by faith (Acts xv. 9); and that faith is the victory [or the victorious principle] "which overcometh the world" (1 John v. 5). It works by love, because it excites this gratitude in the heart; as we read: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again;" it purifies the heart, because in proportion as love for Christ occupies our affections, every impure desire will be expelled from it; and it overcomes the world, because all that the world has to tempt us will be overcome by the strength of this love for Christ, who calls us out of the world to his service.

This is strengthened by the fact that the whole scheme of our redemption is for the greater glory of God, and that his glory is to be seen in the marvellous change of sinners, vile and lost, to holy, faithful children. There is the purpose of God the Father, the reward of God the Son, the work of God the Holy Ghost; and it is for this that God has made a church for himself in the world. So the apostle Peter reasons:

“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” A godly life is the homage of the believer to the God of salvation. It is, therefore, impossible that any one who truly believes in Christ as his Saviour, should not be desirous and endeavor to do good works for the praise of God.

b. From this it follows that we are to judge of our faith by the effects it has on our hearts and lives. We are saved by faith, — that is, by faith and through faith we become partakers of Christ’s blessings in the redemption. This faith assures us of salvation ; but the Scripture teaches us in many places that we are greatly liable to be deceived in this most important matter. The promises of God cannot deceive us : it must be certain that he who believes is safe ; but we may be deceived as to the reality or genuineness of our faith itself. There is a spurious faith, or a persuasion of the mind that we are safe in Christ, when we are not, but are still in our guilt. The New Testament, therefore, and many parts of the Old, insist upon our taking especial pains to certify or assure ourselves of our being Christians. So the apostle exhorts us to examine ourselves whether we be *in the faith*. That is the thing to be ascertained : for, if we be in the faith, all is well ; if we be not in the faith, all is wrong. But with what test shall we prove or try ourselves ? How may we know true faith from false faith ? The Scripture leaves us in no doubt here. “Faith without works is dead. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Unless our belief be a living principle, moving us to good works, it is spurious ; for

our Saviour tells us that "not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So, not to multiply texts, the Psalmist, when asking divine help in his self-examination, prays : "Search me, O God, and know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting." If our faith does not work by love, if it does not purify our hearts, if it does not lead us to overcome the world, it is spurious ; for the assurance of faith, as our Catechism teaches, consists not in the simple persuasion of the mind that we are in Christ, but in the evidences of its sanctifying power. So the believer is faithful to maintain good works that he may be assured in himself of the fruits thereof.

c. For the same reason that the believer desires to glorify God by his own godly life, he desires that other sinners may be brought to glorify him also ; and the method by which he is to seek the satisfaction of his desire is very obvious : "Let your light [that is, your faith in the gospel] so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." So the apostle Peter : "Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Again, in the Epistle to the Hebrews : "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised) ; and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Our blessed Lord did not only proclaim his mission to be divine, but proved it to be so by his miraculous works of heal

ing and life-giving power. All those works were symbolical of his gracious works in the salvation of souls from death and sin. His miracles of healing the body ceased when their purpose was accomplished ; but the greater miracles of renewing and sanctifying the hearts and lives of sinners will continue until the end of time to prove the gospel divine. This is his own appointed method, which Christians are to pursue when their gratitude for the love which Christ has shown their own souls moves them to win the impenitent from the ways of sin, and to animate the flagging zeal of their fellow-Christians in their Master's honor. This is a most solemn consideration for us, who profess the religion of Christ. We cannot be indifferent to the practice of others, and be innocent. Our lives should be constant testimonies before the world that the gospel teaches us to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Nay, we should give this testimony for the express purpose of winning others to glorify our God in a religious life.

Thus have we learnt that true faith is the means by which the grace of Christ brings sinners to repentance, and fits believers through a godly practice on earth for the holy blessedness of heaven ; and that the method by which faith works is the inclining our hearts through a grateful love, to do the will, and seek the glory of our God and Saviour. Therefore, though we are saved by grace alone, wholly on account of Christ's merits, and though our own works have no merit in the sight of God, we must still do good works to prove our thankfulness, to advance our Saviour's praise, to assure ourselves that our faith is genuine, and to persuade our fellow-men to seek the same salvation, and glorify God by a Christian life.

SECONDLY: *The testimony of Scripture that none who continue in wicked lives shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

This, though very properly repeated for the enforcement of the truth, is but a repetition of the previous argument, and needs no demonstration other than the direct testimonies of Holy Scripture. No religious opinion can be sound which tolerates a wilful perseverance in known sin. The gospel was sent to turn men from wickedness to the service of God, and the heaven which it promises is holy and pure, receiving into its blessedness none who love sin. It is as true now as before Christ came, that "the wicked shall be cast into hell with all the nations who forget God." God will have mercy upon all who truly rely on Christ for salvation, but the main part of that salvation is deliverance from the power of sin. Therefore, none truly rely upon Christ, or trust in his mercy, who are not sincerely penitent, and who do not earnestly endeavor by his grace to follow his example.

Beloved, let us examine ourselves by these tests whether we be in Christ or not. It will be a fearful thing if, after professing ourselves Christians, we should fall at last, because of our neglects or our vices, into the bitter pains of eternal death!

LECTURE XLI.

THE NATURE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

FIRST LECTURE.

THIRTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

THE NATURE OF TRUE CONVERSION.

(FIRST LECTURE.)

QUEST. LXXXVIII. *Of how many parts doth the true conversion of man consist ?*

ANS. Of two parts. Of the mortification of the old, and of the quickening of the new man.

QUEST. LXXXIX. *What is the mortification of the old man ?*

ANS. It is a sincere sorrow of heart that we have provoked God by our sins; and more and more to hate and flee from them.

QUEST. XC. *What is the quickening of the new man ?*

ANS. It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.

QUEST. XCI. *What are good works ?*

ANS. Only those which proceed from a true faith, and are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men.

IN our lesson for the last Lord's day we were taught that the consequence of our deliverance from misery by the grace of Christ through faith is our doing of good works as the fruits of a lively and constraining gratitude, and, therefore, that they who by their wilful continuance in wicked lives prove their not having been converted unto God, can have from the doctrine of the gospel no true hope of salvation. It follows, properly, that we should ascertain what true conversion of a sinner to God is, or, as the Catechism has it, in what true conversion consists,—the knowledge of which will discover plainly what a Christian means by good works. These two points are handled in the lesson which we are now to study.

FIRST: *The nature of true conversion.* (88th, 89th, 90th Questions and Answers.)

SECONDLY: *The nature of good works.* (91st Question and Answer.)

FIRST: *The nature of true conversion.*

I. The purpose of God in the gospel being to deliver "his people from the power" as well as the guilt "of their sins," there must be wrought in all those who are partakers of that salvation, a radical change from a sinful to a holy life. This transformation will be complete in the fulness of the redemption, that is, when the believer is taken up to be with Christ, his Head and Forerunner; but on earth it is gradual, though surely progressive. This process we commonly call sanctification. There must, therefore, be a beginning of this transformation or sanctification, a time when the tide of the soul's moral life is turned from its natural ebb towards eternal death and flows toward heaven. This act of change we call *conversion*.

Salvation being all of grace, the conversion of a sinner from sin to God's service must be from a sovereign, divine power, exerted in the sinner's soul, changing its principles and motives of conduct; but as the operation of grace is through the moral faculties of free agents, and not a mere force impelling us against our will and understanding, the sinner, called effectually by divine grace, turns himself by the divine strength so imparted to him. Conversion, therefore, is indeed accomplished by the grace of God, but it is also the act of the sinner himself. In the former part of the Catechism, on our Deliverance, we found conversion, or the change from the old to the new man, among the "benefits" which we "receive from the death and sacrifice of Christ on

the cross " (Question 43d), and *there* we treated of it as the act of God. This conversion of the sinner by God is also called by Scripture regeneration, or the begetting again by the power of the Holy Ghost with the seed of the word (1 Peter i. 23), because it is an imparting of a new moral life to the soul, from which holy actings will proceed. *Here* we find conversion among the evidences of our thankfulness to God for having "delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Hence, we are now to consider it as the act of the sinner under the influence of divine grace.

II. The Catechism declares this true conversion to consist in two parts. 1. The mortification of the old man. 2. The quickening of the new man.

Let us, before proceeding farther, ascertain the meaning of these terms. The contrasted expressions "old man" and "new man" are taken from Scripture. The apostle (Eph. iv. 22-24) says: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" [holiness of truth]. Man, here, is put for our moral nature: "the old man," for the nature we are born with, — whence it is also called "the natural man" (1 Cor. ii. 14); "the new man," for the holy nature, which we derive from the Holy Spirit in regeneration, — whence it is also called "spiritual." We inherit the first from the first Adam; we receive the second by faith from the second Adam, who is Christ. "Mortification" and "quickenings" are also scriptural words. Mortification signifies, liter-

ally, slaying or putting to death, and hence, metaphorically, deadening. "If ye through the spirit do mortify [*θανατοῦτε*] the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. vii. 13). "Mortify [*νέκρώσατε*], therefore, your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5). Quickening is, literally, reviving, or making alive [*ζωοποιέω*], and hence may have the metaphorical sense of strengthening, or increasing, life. Strictly speaking, only God can kill the old man, or revive — make to life — the new man; yet here, and in close accordance with Scripture, the believer has a personal agency in mortifying the one and quickening the other. We are taught, also, that the mortification of our old nature and the quickening of our new nature are carried on by the believer simultaneously in the continuous process of conversion, or transformation; which shows, that, though the new life is implanted, it is not immediately, or without resistance, perfectly paramount in the soul, but is opposed and hindered by our old nature, not yet utterly killed, though it has had its death-blow. Conversion, therefore, on our part, is a struggle or conflict which the believer, animated by the grace of God in the new life, maintains against the power of sin "which still remaineth, against our will, in us"; and this conflict, though the new life must be ultimately victorious, is sharp and often with various alternations or vacillations to either side. It is the new life within our carnal nature, and, therefore, opposed and impeded by the lusts and infirmities of our fallen, or old nature. This the apostle describes (Rom. vii. 19–25): "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law [a

principle] that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." We are now prepared to inquire,

1. What is the mortification of the old man ? "It is a sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins ; and more and more to hate and flee from them."

a. "A sincere sorrow of heart, that we have provoked God by our sins." It is the believer who has this sorrow. Though he is now forgiven, and is enjoying the favor of God here, and the hope of eternal blessedness hereafter, he is for that very reason more sorrowful on account of his offences against God. He mourns his past sins and his present failures, not because he dreads, like a slave, the punishment he deserves and cannot escape from, but because he has done such grievous wrong against the holy God, who is so kind and merciful to his soul in Christ Jesus. He acknowledges his desert of hell, and shudders at the terrible danger he hopes to escape, but he rather sees in the agonies of the eternal death the infinite proof of God's condemnation of such sins as he has committed, — the estimate God has of its abominable evil. He trusts for mercy through the righteousness of Christ, the ground of his atonement (or reconciliation) to God ; but the infinite means provided, because necessary for

his redemption in the humiliation, painful obedience, and more painful sufferings of Christ the Son of God incarnate, convinces him yet more of the guilt of all sin, while they increase immeasurably his love for the God he has offended, and, therefore, his sorrow of heart for his great sins against his heavenly Father and best friend. The holiness of God condemns him, the righteousness of God's law condemns him, as very wicked and degraded; but the love of God and his unspeakable mercy in Christ Jesus, the deep humiliation and bitter sufferings of his Saviour, the long-suffering, patience, and successful perseverance of the Holy Ghost in bringing him, notwithstanding his obstinate, rebellious resistance, into salvation,—the consideration of these, I say, show him, in yet darker colors, his extreme baseness and utter inexcusableness. He sees that it was his sin, with that of others like himself, which brought the dreadful wrath of God upon Christ, his surety; that all his healing comes from the stripes which Christ bore in his stead, and all his hope of life from the exquisite agonies of his incarnate Lord dying the death man deserved to die. Therefore, when with true faith he looks upon Christ as his Saviour, and sees in his Lord's glorified body the scars of the crucifixion, he remembers all that Jesus suffered because of his guilt, and he mourns and reproaches himself for all his sins. He sees, also, the great pains the blessed Spirit has taken for his conversion, in giving him the Holy Scripture, and all the other means of grace, with opportunities of repentance; in pursuing him by arguments and warnings and invitations and promises; in pressing the truth closely home upon his understanding and heart and conscience; in forcing, as it were, his way

into his soul, enlightening his mind, turning his affections, and graciously overpowering his will, and now bringing him to repentance and dwelling within him, to move and strengthen him unto those good works which are the grateful evidences of his faith in Christ ; and, therefore, he sees the enormous wickedness of those sins of his which insulted and grieved and wounded the Holy Spirit at the very time the Holy Comforter was striving to save him ; the opportunities he despitefully misimproved ; the obstinate resistances he made ; the wilful breaking through of restraints which he was so often guilty of ; and, even now, the feeble zeal of his renewed mind in seconding and carrying out to practice the religious purposes that grace has inspired him with. There is, thus, not a doctrine or fact or incident of the salvation he believes to be his, which does not enhance his sorrow for sin. This is the sorrow which is the sign of true conversion, — the sorrow for sins which springs from an apprehension (or trustful belief) of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus by the grace of the Holy Ghost. Such sorrow as springs only from a fear of God's wrath on account of our sins, though it may mingle with more gracious motives to hate sin, is no proof of genuine repentance, because it is wholly selfish, and does not bring us back to the love of God. It is not necessarily sinful, nay, as we have said, it may aid in moving the sinner to repentance, but in itself it is no proof of our conversion, and in the absence of reliance upon Christ it is the reverse, — a sorrow that worketh death, because there is no submission of the heart to God. But the sorrow which comes from faith in Christ's love kills in the heart our enmity to God, and bows us at the feet of God, weeping yet loving children.

b. We learn that this sorrow is not a mere sentiment or emotion, a thing of sighs and tears and regrets, but that it operates as an energetic principle, making us "hate" all sin, and resolutely "to flee from it." How can they who have seen how odious sin is in God's sight, continue to offend him by wilfully committing it? How can they who have seen what their sins brought upon Christ, inflict fresh wounds on his love, and before the world "crucify, as it were, the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame"? How can they who have seen that sin is a direct insult and resistance and grievance to the Holy Spirit in his gracious work upon our hearts, throw fresh injuries and obstacles in his merciful and sanctifying way? The believer, therefore, will turn from sins with abhorrence, he will hate them, he will resist temptation to them, he will fly from them as from disgusting, guilty, perilous enemies to God and his soul. The more he learns of God in Christ, the more he enjoys the comforts of his religion, the more will he hate sin and fly from it. Day by day, as his faith strengthens, will he "mortify" "the old man," and show his gratitude to God in Christ by hating all that God hates, and avoiding all that God has forbidden.

2. The quickening of the new man.

"It is a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

a. A sincere joy of heart in God through Christ.

If any, hearing us discourse of the sorrow and self-condemnations and painful strugglings, temptations within and without us, which accompany repentance, suppose that conversion to God is only a melancholy

and grievous temper, clouding our life in gloom, and making our religious practice an afflictive penance, they need farther teaching in the blessed experience of a believing soul. As the "old man" and the "new man" are, so long as our Christian life is in the mortal body of sin, struggling for the mastery, and the old man, our worse self, must be resolutely "mortified," we must feel the anguish and agonies of a death, an execution, or, as the Scripture more emphatically calls it, a crucifixion of our natural tendencies and desires. Therefore hate, a very strong passion, is sent to our aid, that we may set ourselves on our wickedness with the ardor of a combatant, who minds not his own sufferings in his determination to inflict death on his foe. But hate is not enough to bear us victoriously through. There is a stronger passion yet,—the power most prevalent and impelling in God or man,—love, which sheds through the faculties and affections of the human soul a delicious ardor, absorbing the whole nature to one purpose, and concentrating all its forces on one enterprise. Faith is strong, hope is stronger, but love is strongest in all the operations of the Christian life. It is the superlative of the three degrees of heavenly grace, the acme of the climax by which we ascend to God. Hence, in this most difficult work of our conversion, love alone is equal by divine grace to its accomplishment, and has the largest share in the process. God, from whom comes the divine life which assimilates us to himself, is love; and love to God is so identified with the new life, that we cannot distinguish it from the life itself. It can be engendered, quickened, nurtured, perfected only by love. It is the love of God in Christ which awakens love in our hearts. "We

love him because he first loved us." "The love of Christ constraineth us . . . to live not unto ourselves but unto him who died for us and rose again." It is the perception, the persuasion, the apprehension, the bringing home to himself of the love of God in Christ, which transforms the believer by an all-pervading energy, thrilling, subduing, exciting all his senses into a willing, happy, obedient creature of Christ's will. As in his life-giving miracle the prophet stretched himself on the body of the child, so does Christ by the Holy Spirit, in regenerating love, closely embrace the soul of his choice, warming it with his own divine warmth, breathing into it his own divine breath, until it returns the glow, the breath, the clinging embrace, and rises with him a new creature, conscious of eternal life.

The first effect of this love of God, through faith in Christ, is joy : joy, that we possess Christ as our own ; joy in the great love he shows to us ; joy in the delightful love we bear towards him ; joy in the beauty of his holiness ; joy that we may partake of that highest beauty ; joy in our deliverance from the displeasure of him whose love is our greatest happiness ; joy in the assured hope of a perfect, eternal consummation of such transcendent bliss ; joy, that he will accept any returns of our gratitude ; joy, that he enables us to make those returns by our own powers, poor in themselves, but vigorous from his imparted grace ; joy, that we may give up our whole lives, all we are, all we have, now and forever, to "him whom" our "soul loveth."

Christian joy, joy springing from such a source, must be more than a lively passion or a rapturous sentiment. It inspires the soul with a divine energy, and gives a

tone of vigorous health to all its faculties. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," saith the Holy Ghōst by the prophet to Israel. Therefore the Catechism, in its definition of conversion: "With love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works." The believer, rejoicing over his deliverance, is filled with gratitude to his deliverer, and ardently gives himself up to God's service. His inquiry is, What can I do to please him, my Father, my Saviour, my Sanctifier? It is now his delight to obey the divine will. His heart is turned from sin because it provokes God; he hates it and would fly from it. So when he discovers what God's law requires, he not only assents to its requirements, but rejoices in them, and delights to do what he loves for the sake of him whom he loves. Far from considering those commandments grievous, they are to him a perfect law of liberty, for he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and as he feels the new life and love and joy in God through Christ filling and animating his soul, he gladly gives all his strength to every good work which Providence lays to his hand. It is no longer a spirit of bondage, making him a reluctant servant through fear of wrath, but the cheerful, earnest obedience of a child loving his Father, God, and loving the work his Father gives him, that he may become more and more like Christ, with whom the Father is well pleased, and through whom the Father is well pleased with all who endeavor to follow in his steps.

Such is the nature of true conversion.

1. It is accompanied by strong emotions, — sorrow, and joy, and hate, and love, anguish and delight. Yet it is a fatal mistake that mere excitement of feeling,

even though it be about religious things, is a proof of conversion. Religion does not lie in heats of devotion or exaggerated passion. The heathen are so excited in their idolatries, as were the Israelites before the golden calf. We must carefully examine whence these feelings come : whether they spring from our having offended God or not ; whether from joy in God or not ; whether our hearts are converted from sin to the service of God or not.

2. We have described the converted heart under strong terms, setting it forth in the manner which, were grace perfect in us, it would manifest itself. Still we must not despair of God's mercy, or doubt his renewing grace, if we come far short of these high sensibilities and of the holy practice which the law of God requires. Conversion is a change begun, it is true, in regeneration, but not consummated until the believer enters into heaven. He hates sin and flees from it more and more ; he loves God and delights to do the will of God in good works. Yet the corruption is still within him, though against his will ; and grace is still in conflict with the corruption. Nay, the conflict rouses the corruption to a desperate resistance. Before, his eyes were blinded, his conscience inert ; he did not see or feel the vileness and misery of sin, and knew not how great a sinner he was. Now, his sense of sin is keen. He compares himself with the law of God, the claims of God's love on his heart ; and in proportion as he desires and endeavors to obey, he discovers, to his shame and grief, his evilness of heart, his shortcomings, his failures, his lapses. He mourns that he hates sin so little ; that he loves God in Christ so little ; that he sins so often ; that he does so few good works, and those so

feebly. But the very sharpness of the conflict proves the activity of grace ; and while he suffers that his spiritual life is so weak, he should thank God with joy that he is no longer dead. It is a great change which only the grace of God could work, that the current of his life has been turned from love of sin to love of holiness, from enmity against God to delight in the way of God's commandments.

3. Hence the main and only sufficient evidence of our conversion lies in our principles. If the old man reigns over us, and we yield our desires and our affections and our acts to its corrupt will, we are yet dead in our sins ; but if the new man be established in our hearts, and we yield to its godly will our desires and affections and acts, sincerely endeavoring after new obedience, we are children of grace. This is what our church says in her office for the holy communion, which is the profession and covenant of our faith in Christ : “ We do not come to the supper to testify thereby that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves ; but, on the contrary, considering that we seek our life out of ourselves in Christ, we acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death. Therefore, notwithstanding we feel many infirmities and miseries in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and do not give ourselves to serve God with that zeal as we are bound, and have daily to strive with the weakness of our faith and the evil lusts of our flesh, yet, since we are, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, sorry for these weaknesses, and earnestly desirous to fight against our unbelief, and to live according to all the commandments of God, therefore we rest assured that no sin or infirmity, which still remaineth against our will in us, can hinder us from

being received of God in mercy, and from being made worthy partakers of the heavenly meat and drink."

Lastly : We see how vain are all endeavors after repentance before faith in Christ. It is only the love of God in Christ that can change the enmity of our hearts to love. It is only our love to God in Christ that can constrain us to live not unto ourselves but unto him. Therefore, the contemplation of God's love to us in Christ is the grand means of cultivating our repentance and accomplishing our conversion. It is as we look up to our crucified Forerunner on his throne, that the light of heaven streams down on our souls, and the attraction of God's holy love overcomes the attraction of earth and sin. Look to Jesus, your Saviour ; believe in him and hope in his promise ; then shall you run with patience the race set before you, and at last come to perfect rest, in the perfect enjoyment of his love.

LECTURE XLII.

THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.

SECOND LECTURE.



THIRTY-THIRD LORD'S DAY.

THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.

(SECOND LECTURE.)

QUEST. XCI. *But what are good works?*

ANS. Only those which proceed from true faith, are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men.

CLEAR and sufficient as this definition must be to the evangelical believer, it is nevertheless true that the subject involves radical questions of moral philosophy which have engaged the greatest and keenest minds from the beginning of inquiry to the present day. The results of these long, large, and able discussions have not been satisfactory, for the war of opinions is as vigorous as ever. It does not consist with our purpose to occupy ourselves at any length with controversies which have lasted for more than two thousand years, while it would be the extreme of presumption to attempt a settlement of them except from the plain teaching of Holy Scripture; yet a slight notice of the more important points in dispute is desirable for our future expositions of the matter before us, and also to show how impossible it is, without the wisdom from on high, to find the path of truth and virtue.

What is right? This question meets us at the very outset of moral investigation. All are practically agreed, however they may differ in terms or modes of

statement, that the doing of right is our highest duty and best wisdom. But what is right? or (for it amounts to the same thing), how shall we know what is right? From this point the leaders of opinion, with their several schools, widely diverge.

Right is a figurative term, synonymous with straight. But to ascertain whether or not our conduct is right or straight, we must have an undoubted, infallible, attainable rule by which to try it. Now, by what rule shall we try our moral acts? Some say, the rule is in our own souls. We are so constituted that the soul distinguishes right from wrong as necessarily and naturally as the eye perceives proportion or the ear harmony. Hence they give to what we ordinarily call conscience the name of moral sense. But, passing over some grave difficulties in this scheme, (as the imperfection of our moral nature which renders the judgment of our consciences untrustworthy, and the manifest fact of a diversity in the moral decisions of men,) we ask, if we be so constituted as to discern right and wrong, Who gave us this most eminent of all faculties? and, as the answer must be, God, we ask again, By what standard has he regulated all the consciences of men? Should we be answered, The fitness of things, (or the order of that constitution of things of which we form a part,) the difficulty is only moved a step farther back; for besides the impossibility of so comparing the innumerable parts of such a vast and complicated system as to ascertain what the fitness of things requires of us, we are forced to ask again, According to what rule did the Creator organize this constitution in which he has placed us? We, therefore, come inevitably to the question which has long been agitated by profound

thinkers : whether right and wrong are determined by the simple will of God, or by an eternal rule antecedent to and independent of the will of God ?

It would be more curious than profitable to relate the many extravagant and even ridiculous arguments and suppositions advanced by the disputants on both sides, especially during the three centuries after the middle of the 13th, when the two schools of Thomas Aquinas and Dun Scotus (Erigena) convulsed the religious world of Europe with their subtle polemics. The Thomists held with Aquinas, who, though a champion of the Augustinian doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty, taught that God always wills right, but that he wills it because it is right, and that it is not right solely because he wills it. Hence they assumed the name of *Realists* : intimating that they held to a real, not an arbitrary distinction between right and wrong. On the other hand, the Scotists held that what God wills is right, simply because he wills it, and that had he commanded the opposite, which is now wrong, it would have been right, and that which is now right would have been wrong. Hence they were called *Nominalists*, because they held that right was right, and wrong wrong only because God declared them so to be, and not from any original quality in either of them.

A modest searcher after divine truth, not intoxicated by metaphysical subtleties, shrinks from adopting either extreme. In the first place, though the terms antecedent and independent are used only in a logical sense, we are shocked by the doctrine that anything in morals is before God, or independent of him in any sense : which would be, in effect, reviving the heathen doctrine of fate controlling the divinity. Then, again,

we are as much shocked by the bare supposition that God's determination of right and wrong is merely arbitrary, so arbitrary that he might have ordained the reverse. Let us see if there be not a way of satisfying ourselves more in accordance with our reverence for the God of the Bible.

The will of God flows from his divine nature, which is self-existent, eternal, and infinitely perfect. This infinite perfection implies perfect consistency in all the divine thoughts, purposes, and acts. For if any one of these were contrary to, or discordant with, any one other, he would not be perfect, because one or the other of the differings would be an imperfection. Thus we should place the eternal rule of right not in any mere arbitrary will of God, because his nature being infinitely, therefore unchangeably perfect, his will must be in accordance with his nature. Therefore the eternal law of right can be found only in the self-caused nature of God, or, in other words, the entire consistency of God with himself. Thus, on the one hand, the will of God in determining right is not arbitrary because it is consistent with his infinite nature ; and on the other hand, right is not antecedent to or independent on God, because he is self-existent and eternal. The holiness of a moral creature is his conformity to the divine character so far as a finite being can resemble the infinite ; the holiness of God is his infinitely perfect consistency with himself. If this view cannot resolve the difficulty of the schoolmen, it will, at least, relieve the mind of the child-like Christian who can submit himself only to God. To repeat what we said in the beginning, we must have a rule by which to try our moral conduct ; and that rule must be ascertained,

simple, and infallible. We cannot delay our acts until we satisfy ourselves respecting the conclusions of general conscience, or the fitness of things ; nor from what we have seen of men's differences in sentiment and opinion, could we ever come to an undoubted conclusion. When the most learned and ingenious disagree so widely, the great mass of mankind cannot be expected to distinguish between right and wrong. But when we take the law of God for our standard, we conform ourselves to the infinitely wise will of him who has made us and all things, thereby placing us in relations to a system so harmonious and settled that any violation of his law would be a violation of fitness, and any violation of fitness a violation of his law. We must go farther. It is not enough that we conform ourselves to the law of God, but we must take it as our rule, because it is the law of God. In other words, we must obey, not the law, but God from whom the law proceeds. Our duty is to God ; his law is the rule which he has prescribed for the rendering of our duty. It is incorrect to speak of our obligation to right, or of duty to law. Right and law respect the relations of moral beings, but are not themselves moral beings, and, therefore, cannot themselves be objects of duty. That goes beyond or through the law to the being or beings with whom we are in relation. This is clearly shown by the scriptural fact that love is the fulfilling of the law, and by the summary of the law in supreme love to God and love to our neighbor as ourselves. Such an affection cannot be rendered to a law, or a principle, but can be given only to another conscious moral being. We cannot keep the law of God without supreme love to him, and

therefore our obedience is due to God who ordained the law, not to the law itself. It is, therefore, most unphilosophical to attempt a transference of our obedience from the will of God to a mere principle or rule, — an error they commit who would place our rule of right elsewhere than in the divine will. To tell me that I must do right simply because it is right, and not because it is the will of God, is to say that God should have no place in morals. It is true that God rewards those who do right, and punishes those who do wrong ; but to put my obligation on that principle is to make God only a judge and an executioner. No ; I must do right and avoid wrong, because I love him and it is his will that I should so order my conduct. Hence the Christian considers God to be the only object of all duty, our so-called duties to ourselves or our fellow-creatures being covered by our duty to him, because he has enjoined them upon us.

The ground of our duty to God is the fact that he is our Creator and the Creator of all things. All our faculties of soul and body were by him brought into existence out of nothing, and are by him maintained in existence. He, therefore, owns us and has a right to our entire service. As the Creator he is the Governor, Legislator, and Judge ; every attribute of sovereignty is included by his creatorship. Our sense of obligation should be vastly enhanced by his infinite wisdom and goodness and holy excellence, and, above all, by the redemption in Christ Jesus ; nay, it is by the exercise of these adorable attributes that our love to him is drawn out ; but, nevertheless, the original basis of our moral obligation is our being his creatures. Does any one

ask me here, If God were other than good or holy, should I be bound to love him? or, if he commanded me to do anything contrary to right, should I feel myself bound to obey him? I reply that such questions are profane absurdities. I cannot conceive of God without infinitely perfect attributes. They are essential to my idea of God. Without them the imaginary being you talk of would not be God. I cannot consent, even in supposition, to put my God out of existence. I can have no knowledge, no thought, no being, except from my Creator. To him I belong; therefore is his law the rule of my life. He is infinitely excellent; I only know of excellence but from him. He is my Father, my Saviour, my Sanctifier, my all; therefore do I love him, and am conscious that it is my duty to make his will my own.

These considerations, though perhaps more abstruse, and apparently more abstract than those which are ordinarily brought before you, are far from unprofitable. On a correct understanding of the great truth of our obligation to God alone depend our correctness of belief in many consequent doctrines; and if we have grace to hold it fast, it will be a clue to guide us out of many a labyrinth where we should otherwise wander "in 'wondering mazes lost.'" If God be wrong, who shall tell us what is right? If God be right, what need of conjecture? We believe in God, and are not at liberty to make any question as to what is right or what is wrong from our own reason, but only to ascertain what he determines, and has declared by his law to be right or wrong. There alone can we rest.

Let us now turn to the exposition of the Catechism itself. The answer to the 91st Question defines "good

works" to be "only those which proceed from true faith [and] are performed according to the law of God and to his glory, and not such as are founded on our imaginations or the institutions of men."

1. It must be remembered that this definition occurs in an account of the new or converted man; and, therefore, that the phrase "good works" is used not in an absolute, but in the evangelical sense. To us sinners, who are acceptable to God only through the infinitely meritorious mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, "that which is without faith is sin," and our best deeds are offensive to God except as they are cleansed by the blood, covered by the righteousness, and presented by the intercession of our great Surety. It is also obvious that the Christian, who makes (as the Catechism goes on to say every converted man does) the word of God his only rule of right practice, must exercise faith in the truth of the Scriptures, which faith respects the justice of the divine commandments as well as the mercy of the divine promises, so that in proportion to the strength of our faith in the word of God will be our aim to comply with the divine will. Faith in Christ is necessary, therefore, not to the original or absolute goodness of a moral act, but to our recovery from the rebellion of sin, and the acceptableness of our imperfect obedience in the sight of God. Besides, every motion, desire, and endeavor to do right, which we have, is the effect of divine grace, "working in us both to will and to do of God's good pleasure," and this grace is ever given, and given only in answer to faith. Hence our Christian life can be maintained only by the exercise of a true faith, without which any good works on our part are impossible.

2. Those only are good works which “are performed according to the law of God.”

a. We are the creatures of God, and therefore belong to him; so that his will, as declared to us in his law, is absolutely sovereign over us; and the only question we have a right to make respecting our conduct is: “What doth the Lord our God require of us?”

b. We are bought with a price ransomed from the power of Satan and from everlasting death by the most precious blood of Christ; and he has bought us to himself, as a peculiar (his own) people, zealous of good works; for which reason we are, by the power of his Holy Spirit, “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” If, therefore, we accept the redemption of Christ for our souls, we must, by divine help, assume the obligations which the purpose of the redemption implies, and walk (or order our practice) according to the rules ordained for us in the law of God. This should not be by any constraint of servile fear, but with the willingness which the most lively and paramount gratitude inspires. “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.” Our whole life, in all its thoughts, affections, words, actions, and energies, is the thank-offering which we should render unto Christ for his unspeakable love in offering himself as a sacrifice to redeem us unto God.

c. Nay, more; God, accepting us in Christ his Son,

accepts us as his children ; and, as the proof and earnest of his Fatherly love, he sends into our hearts the spirit of his Son, which is the spirit of adoption whereby we cry " Abba, Father." We, therefore, should be " followers of God as dear children." As an affectionate child confides in his father's wisdom and love, desiring nothing so much as to obey his father's will, so the Christian, committing all that concerns him for life and death, time and eternity, to his heavenly Father's disposition, asks only what that Father would have him to do, and does it with his whole heart.

3. They must also be performed to the glory of God. This has been made evident by our previous considerations. The original and ultimate end of all things can be none other than the manifestation of the glory of their great Author ; and as the moral creature is the greatest of God's creatures, the obligation of all intelligent beings to manifest, by the beauty of obedient lives, the wisdom and holiness of the Creator's moral law is proportionately great. But the highest glory of God is placed by himself in the redemption of sinful men by the atonement of Christ, and their elevation by the grace of the Holy Ghost from the depths of guilty depravity to the perfect eternal holiness of heaven. Therefore are we doubly bound by our creation and redemption, nay, trebly, since we add the dedication of ourselves to glorify God by our bodies and spirits which are his. This can be done only by an entire conformity to the will of God, as made known by his work. What virtue of our own invention we may pretend to, if it have any praise, would be to our glory ; what duty we perform in obedience to the will of God, reflects glory on him. The light of the truth is our light only

because it shines upon us from God ; therefore does our Lord say, what is repeated in a thousand Scriptures : “ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The motive of the divine glory is, therefore, essential to any good work of the Christian.

It may, however, be asked here, whether or not this motive of the divine glory should exclude from our hearts all motive of our own good, so that our obedience to God shall be perfectly disinterested. We answer that, so far from this being the case, such disinterestedness is not only not required, but from the nature of the case, impossible. God has from the beginning implanted in the moral creature a love of happiness and religion, instead of eradicating this strong motive-principle, addresses it by the strongest arguments, and directs it by the divine commandments. When God says, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” he, by making it the measure of our love to our neighbor, recognizes our love of ourselves as just, and shows that without it we cannot know how to obey God in loving our neighbor. The sanctions of the divine law — life in reward of obedience, death in penalty of disobedience — can have no force except as self-love has power in our hearts. So we find our blessed Lord opposing the motives which worldly men have to sin, and hypocrites to an external form of piety, by saying that they have their reward, but that our heavenly Father himself will reward openly all those who serve him out of a sincere heart. According to which principle Moses acted when “ he had respect unto the recompense of reward ” ; nay, our Lord himself, the “ great pattern of a Christian

life," when "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." We do not lose our will when we make the will of God our own ; nor do we lose our happiness when we seek the glory of God which lies in the best happiness of his children. If I am bound to serve the welfare of my fellow-man because he is God's creature, I am bound for the same reason to seek my own welfare, since I am equally God's creature. Besides, the Christian cannot isolate himself. He belongs to a system, each part of which receives, as well as gives, influences for good or evil. God in Christ, and, before the necessity of redemption, God the Creator, is the head of the system from whom all the vital influences for good proceed, as to him the issues of praise return. We cannot, therefore, obey God without receiving our share of the benefit which our obedience works in the system. We cannot, therefore, and ought not to ignore our interest in doing the will of God, any more than we should seek to isolate ourselves from the constitution of things in which God has placed us. The glory of our heavenly Father is the blessedness of his children ; therefore should we seek our own good in the way of his commandments, from the very desire we have for his glory.

If our foregoing demonstrations have been sound, the remaining part of the *answer* before us needs none.

1. The law of God being our only and sovereign rule, we have no right to mingle with it, or oppose it by, any imagination or thought of our own. It is not permitted us to do what we suppose or what seems to us right ; we must do only that which God declares in

his blessed word to be right. The settlement of what is right or wrong is infinitely above our faculty. We must take the rule only from him who alone knows. Therefore we ought most religiously to guard ourselves from the temptation of acting from our impulses, our feelings, or opinions ; for all these come out of a sinful heart, which is deceitful above all things. Our duty is to obey God, not ourselves ; and this we do only when we rule our hearts and lives by the commandments he has given us in his holy word.

2. If we are not to obey our own imaginations, neither are we to obey the imaginations of other men, whether they come to us in traditions or decrees of churches, or dogmas of associations, or public opinion. Nothing is our duty but what God has commanded ; and we, in effect, transfer our allegiance from him to the authority of sinners like ourselves, when we adopt any article into our creed, any ceremony into our worship, or any rule into our morality, which God has not expressly given. There is a strong tendency even in conscientious people to go astray here. They cannot resist the influence of those whom they think good or wise, nor refuse that which is plausibly expedient. So we find the Jews of our Lord's time following the traditions of the elders. Afterwards the Papal church tyrannized in the same manner over the consciences of the people ; and among Protestants of our own day, methods of worship and reform, wholly from the inventions of men, are made paramount to the plainest dictates of Holy Scripture. Dearly beloved brethren, be not so deceived. You can render the God of the Bible no divided allegiance. If the opinion of men be your god, serve it ; but if God who

gave us the Bible be your God, serve him alone. The Scripture was given that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and nothing is a good work which is not founded on "thus saith the Lord."

LECTURE XLIII.

**THE ORDER, THE OBLIGATION, AND DIVISION OF THE
DUTIES ENJOINED BY**

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.



THIRTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

QUEST. XCII. *What is the law of God?*

ANS. God spake all these words: I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. — EXODUS xx. 1-17. (Compare Deuteronomy v. 6-21, &c.)

QUEST. XCIII. *How are these Ten Commandments divided?*

ANS. Into two tables: The first of which teaches us how we must behave toward God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor.

IT having been settled by the previous teachings of the Catechism, according to the Scriptures, that the believer called to salvation in Jesus Christ is by the same gospel called to do good works, (86th, 87th, 88th,

89th Questions and Answers,) and also that "good works are only those which proceed from true faith [and] are performed according to the law of God and to his glory; not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men"; it becomes us to inquire what is the law of God, according to which all the conduct of men should be regulated; and we are taught to answer this question by a recital of the Decalogue, or ten commandments, as they are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, 1-17, collated with Deuteronomy v. 6-21; and the next eleven Lord's days are occupied with an exposition of the commandments in their order. They are divided into two tables, because Jehovah wrote them twice, once on two stone tablets prepared by himself (Deut. v. 22), which Moses let fall from his hands, and brake in his indignation at the people's idolatry of the golden calf (Ex. xxxii. 19); and a second time on two tables like the first, prepared, according to his order, by Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 1; Deut. x. 1). Which commandments were written on the first table, and which on the second, we are not expressly told, though it is certain that there were ten in all (Deut. iv. 13; x. 4). All are agreed that the first table included those duties which we owe immediately to God; the second, those he has commanded us to render him through duties to our fellow-men; which is in agreement with our Lord's condensation of the whole law into two great commandments: the first, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength;" the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 37-40); the first of which we find in Deuteronomy vi. 5, and elsewhere;

the second, in Lev. xix. 18, 34. But here the Reformed with all the evangelical churches are at difference with the Jews, the Roman Catholics, and a large majority of the Lutherans. Our churches reckon four commandments to the first table, and six to the second. What division was established among the ancient Jews is not very clear. Josephus says (*Ant. c. v. 8*) that God showed them two tables with the ten commandments written upon them, five on each table, which according to the order of his enumeration would, against propriety, throw the fifth commandment into the first table instead of the second, which includes our offices to men (*Ant. c. v. 5*). Philo, however, appears to have considered the preface, "I am the Lord thy God," &c., to have been the first commandment; but as he omits, in his recital, the words of what we consider the first, passing over them to those, "Thou shalt not make any graven gods," &c., it would seem most probable that he conjoined the sense of the preface with the first commandment (in our order). Athanasius follows him in this.*

The Roman Catholics combine the first and second commandments, giving them in their catechisms abridged, so as to avoid the strength of the prohibition against employing images in their devotions. Thus, reducing the number of commandments in the first table to three, they are obliged, that they may keep the number ten, to divide the tenth into two, which is done by making the first clause of the tenth (as given Deut. v. 21, "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife,") the ninth, and the rest of it, the tenth; to which the Reformed churches object, as that would be merely a repe-

* See Jer. Taylor; *Duc. Dub. B. II. Ch. 2, Rule 6.*

tition of the seventh, whereas the closing precept is intended to forbid all envious craving of whatever is our neighbor's. Many of the Lutherans, being partial to pictures in churches for the illustration of divine truths to the laity, have followed the course of the Papists with regard to the disposition of the ten precepts ; but it is fair to add that their best divines lay little stress on the matter, as Walchius, very famous among them, says : " Concerning the division of the Decalogue, there is much dispute. The doctors of the Reformed church give four precepts to the first table and six to the second, in doing which they separate from the first commandment what relates to the making of images, and rank it as the second commandment ; but join the ninth and tenth as one. They contend fiercely for this division, and many of them [*Anhaltini, Marpurgenses atque alii*] accuse Luther of omitting the precept on image-making. We, however, give three precepts to the first table, and seven to the second, referring what God says against image-making to the first precept, and separating the ninth from the tenth. This discussion is of little account. The thing is that it may be arranged so as to give each the liberty of opinion on the division, for it is enough that the commandments be reckoned as ten." (Intro. in Lib. Ecc. Luth. Symbol, L. 1, vi. sec. xl. p. 657.) In this liberal sentiment the eminent Turretin agrees.*

A more important question arises : —

What proof have we that these ten commandments are binding upon us ?

The delivery of this law of the two tables on Sinai by Jehovah to the hands of Moses for the people of

* See Kenrick (Bishop), Theol. Mor. de Decalogue, c. iv.

Israel was not its first promulgation. It had been the rule of God for man from the creation, though unwritten till the finger of God engraved it amidst the terrible glories of his presence. From the beginning he had claimed an entire sovereignty. The apostle tells us, in the first chapter of Romans, that men knew God from the creation of the world, and that idolatry in all its forms originated in their departure from the worship of the true, incorruptible God. Reverence for the name of God is a duty clearly consequent upon our allegiance and worship. The Sabbath was ordained in Eden on the day after the creation of man, while he yet was sinless. Honor to parents, respect of human life, purity as opposed to licentiousness, the right of property, veracity or truthfulness, are all virtues essential to a social constitution in which men were placed by their divine author, and were required by him always, as many facts in the early sacred history show. The final precept, "Thou shalt not covet," enforces the keeping of the heart before him who reads our thoughts, and is a resumption of the previous five, while the necessity of such inward restraint to a secure morality was fully shown by the manner of the original sin, for had not the man and woman first lusted after the forbidden fruit, they had not seized it.

We learn also from Holy Scripture, that the solemn, written enunciation of this law was an act of God's merciful care over his people. He had, as the apostle tells us (Gal. ii. 8, 17), preached the gospel to Abraham four hundred and thirty years before, when he made a covenant with the father of all the faithful, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." His natural posterity, though increased to a very considerable

people, had never been raised to the style of a distinct, free, independent nation, until Jehovah, taking his place as their king, led them out of the land of Egypt, with a promise of bringing them into the land promised by him to their fathers. It was requisite, therefore, that there should be a glorious inauguration of his authority, with a publication of the laws, or constitution, according to which he would reign; and on the other hand, that the people should declare their fealty to their Theocrat by pledging themselves to obey his laws or accepting the constitution which he gave them. Hence the transaction at Sinai was in fact a covenant, God manifesting himself on the mount, Israel protesting, with united voice, "All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient;" in token of which "Moses took the blood" of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, "and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. xxiv. 3-8). You will observe that, according to the analogy of all Scripture, Israel stood before the Lord in a double capacity, as a political nation, and as a church,—as the natural offspring of Abraham, and as the type (the truly faithful among them included by the reality) of the spiritual descendants of the father of all the faithful, the seed of the promised seed,* the church of Christ which he hath redeemed out of all ages and all kindreds of the world. The inference plainly is, that the law is binding on us, who profess allegiance to God through the covenant in the blood of Christ; not the political law, which concerned Israel as a nation, or the ceremonial, which was done away by Christ, the substance of its

* Compare Gal. iii. 16, and Isaiah liii. 10, 11.

shadows and the reality of its types, but the moral law, the law of the ten precepts on the two tables, which, as they had been binding on men from the beginning of the world until Sinai, are binding, since then, until the end of the world.

This is the more obvious from the indisputable consideration, that, as the effect of faith, according to the evangelical scheme, is to produce repentance in the converted sinner by working love in his heart, and so enabling him to overcome the temptations of the world, it must follow that the genuine effects of saving faith are in all ages the same; and, therefore, the fundamental rules or principles of a godly life are in all ages the same. Precepts which only affect men in the regulation of their conduct under a temporary and changeable system, such as the national polity, or typical preparatory ritual of the Jews, may, for that reason, be changed or abrogated; but those which are essential to our relations as human creatures with God, and with our fellow-creatures under the social system God has ordained for us on earth, must be perpetual. Such are the ten commandments.

Thus we find this, the moral law, confirmed by our Lord and the writers of the New Testament, as the rule of life for all believers. Every precept of the two tables is reinforced, often in the very same language and with a distinct recognition of the source from which they are taken, as the ground of the authority.

Exception has, it is true, been by some taken with respect to the fourth commandment, ordaining the rest of the Sabbath in order to its sanctification. That commandment, they say, is *ceremonial*, therefore belonging to the law of ordinances which has been abol-

ished; and *typical*, relating to the "spiritual rest," or freedom from the necessity of our own works, as ground of justification, that God may perform his works in us for his own glory. We shall examine this matter farther when we come to the particular study of the fourth commandment; but at present it is enough to say that on the same principles which require us to take the law of the two tables, we must take it as a whole. God himself divided the moral, the political, and the ceremonial laws from each other, so that we have no right to wrench any part out of one to put it in one of the others.* Besides, the law of the Sabbath was given to our first parents while yet sinless in Eden, and therefore to the whole race, irrespective of national or ceremonial or accidental distinctions of any kind; nor had it, whatever typical character it acquired afterwards, any such character at the time of its original promulgation. The Saviour himself, when he asserted that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," not only points out the spirit of the precept in which it is to be obeyed, but establishes the universality and perpetuity of the precept.

There is another remark preliminary to our exposition of the commandments, which, in consistency with our past and future reasoning, should here be made.

The answer to the 93d Question states that "the first" table "teaches us how we are to behave towards God; the second, what duties we owe to our neighbor." This language, though conformable enough to the common uses of the terms, is not strictly, that is to say, ethically, accurate. Properly, we owe duty only to God. He only is our Lord. What are popularly

* Calvin's Cat. on the Fourth Commandment.

termed duties to our neighbor are not, therefore, in a strict sense, duties to him, but duties to God, who has commanded us so to deport ourselves toward our neighbor as his precepts prescribe. That this is the meaning of the Catechism here, we know from what Ursinus (its chief author) says in his commentary on the place: "The Decalogue is divided, according to the things themselves which are commanded or forbidden, *into the immediate and mediate worship of God*. Generally, is commanded in the Decalogue the worship of God; that which is contrary to God's worship is forbidden. The worship of God is either *immediate*, when moral works are performed immediately unto God, or *mediate*, when moral works are performed unto our neighbor in respect of God. . . . The obedience of the second table of the law is not the immediate worship of God, as the obedience of the first is; yet is it the mediate worship of God, that is, such as is performed to God in our neighbor mediating, or coming between God and us. For the duties [offices] of love toward our neighbor ought to flow, or proceed, out of the love of God [*qu.* love to God]; and being so performed, they are acceptable to God, and are no less done to God himself than the obedience of the first table. . . . The worship required in the two tables differeth in [character of] its objects: for the first table has an immediate object only, which is God; the second has both an immediate object, our neighbor, and farther also a mediate object, God." Hence Ursinus, in his sermon on the Decalogue, comprises it generally in God's worship, divided into two parts: 1. Immediate, towards God alone; 2. Mediate, or towards our neighbor for God's sake.

The value and even necessity of this careful application of terms over the looser language of the text will be seen when we consider the proneness of men to separate the two tables in such a way as though they might observe the first table without observing the second, or the second without observing the first. The former is the fatal error of those pharisaical devotees who are zealous in prayers or other forms of worship, in orthodoxy of opinion or ceremonial, while they neglect charity of heart and speech and act towards their fellow-creatures. The unity of the law of God utterly condemns such inconsistency, and shuts the gate of heaven in the faces of all who practise it. There is no love to God which is not followed by, or rather does not include, love to our neighbor; which is farther shown by the fact that we cannot, as in the address Christ has taught us, claim God as our Father in heaven, without acknowledging as our brethren all his children on earth. The other is the equally fatal error of those who, proud of their personal and social morality, think that they can keep the second table of the law without observing the first, or love their neighbor without first loving God with all their hearts, and rendering him the personal and public homage which he requires. The very source of the law condemns this, because being the law of God, no part of it can be kept without hearty and supreme reverence to the will of him who enjoins the whole. The very order of the law condemns it, because we cannot reach the second table without going through the first. The very terms of the law condemn it, because, if we are to love God with *all* our heart, how can we love our neighbor except love to him be included by our love to God?

Again: If we do not make this distinction, that is, of duties immediate and duties mediate to God, all morality is thrown into uncertainty and confusion. If God be the central source and central object of all duty, no laws emanating from him, no services rendered to him, can ever clash, as no number of straight lines, drawn from a given point, can ever cross each other, or, converging to one point, can ever meet except in that point. While, therefore, we consider our duty referrible to God only, there can be no confusion. All we have to ascertain, is, what God requires of us, and all our relative services toward our fellow-men fall into their appropriate places within the harmonious whole. But when we attempt to apportion or distribute our services among our fellow-men, as though our duty were to each of them, we find the number of relations so great, yet so intermingled, that we cannot see how, amidst the variety and seeming conflict of interests, to combine them in harmonious proportions. How shall a man proportion the duty he owes to his father with the duty he owes to his mother, when their commands or seeming interests are adverse? — the duties he owes to conflicting brothers? — the duties to his family with those he owes to his country, or those to his country with those due to the world? No human intellect has grasp or continuity enough to reason through all the possibilities of results, to determine one of a thousand among the difficulties which may, and every day do, arise. Invariable, supreme love to God is the only clue we can have to guide us through what is plain to him, but an inextricable labyrinth to us.

Take, for example, the question which Arch-Deacon Paley moots in his *Moral Philosophy* (a system which

should never be tolerated for a moment under any pretext in a Christian school) : *Is it ever right to tell a lie?* If we proceed on the principle that all our duty is to God, the thing is settled at once, for God requires truth in the heart, speech, and act; nor can we imagine it possible that in any circumstances a lie can be acceptable to him; but if, adopting the division which Paley follows, of duty to God and duty to man, the latter separates itself from the first, and we attempt to decide it on the comparative benefit or injury of the results to ourselves or others. Thus the Arch-Deacon asserts that a lie is justifiable in certain cases, as, “compliments in the subscription of a letter; a servant’s denying his master [to be at home]; a prisoner’s pleading not guilty; an advocate asserting the justice, or his belief in the justice, of his client’s cause. In such instances, no confidence is destroyed, because none was reposed; no promise to speak the truth is violated, because none was given or understood to be given.” Or “where the person you speak to has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconvenience results from the want of confidence in such cases: as where you tell a falsehood to a madman for his own advantage; to a robber, to conceal your property; to an assassin, to defeat or divert him from his purpose. The particular consequence is, by the supposition, beneficial; and as to the general consequence, the worst that can happen is, that the madman, the robber, the assassin will not trust you again; which (beside that the first is incapable of deducing regular conclusions from having been once deceived, and the last two not likely to come in your way a second time) is sufficiently compensated by the immediate benefit which

you proposed by the falsehood.” What miserable paltering is this ! If a lie is to be justified by mere expediency, or by any man’s judgment of expediency, how shall we know when we meet falsehood or when we meet truth ? How can it be, that, under the universal, perpetual, and particular providence of God, who is infinitely true, a falsehood can ever issue except in disorder and mischief ? Even if the immediate issue be slight or even apparently beneficial, is not the general importance of truth incomparably above such petty, doubtful considerations ? Yet we cannot see, how, under such a system, any better reasoning could be pursued. There are cases, undoubtedly, in which we are not under obligation to speak at all, or even when silence is duty ; but if we speak, and speak not truth, we serve the devil, who is the father of lies, and we shall, if we repent not in Christ, have our portion with him under the wrath of a just God, who has made truth a duty to himself, and a lie a sin against himself. The question cited is but one of innumerable that will arise under a system of ethics other than that which makes God the only object of duty.

For this reason we shall adopt, in all our subsequent study of the moral law, the division of duty into duties to God *immediate* and *mediate*, — those we should render to God directly, and those we should render to him through his creatures in serving them for his sake, according to his command.*

* This is the division adopted and pursued by Ursinus. See his Commentary on the Catechism here.

LECTURE XLIV.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

SECOND PART.

THIRTY-FOURTH LORD'S DAY.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

QUEST. XCIV. *What doth God enjoin in the first command?*

ANS. That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my own soul, avoid and flee from all idolatry, sorcery, soothsaying, superstition, invocation of saints or any other creatures; and learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone; with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart; so that I renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit even the least thing contrary to his will.

QUEST. XCV. *What is idolatry?*

ANS. Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive or have any other object in which men place their trust.

FOLLOWING the division of duties enjoined by the ten commandments, as set forth in our last lecture, viz: those we owe to God immediately, that is, directly to himself, and those we owe to him mediately, that is, through his creatures, we now proceed to the study of the first table of the law, comprising the first four commandments, each of which has immediate reference to God himself.

The first of these is fundamental and comprehensive, including, with a force peculiar to itself, the spirit of the other three, each of which has a specific, particular direction. Thus, the *first* forbids our giving to any creature the place, homage, trust, love, or obedience which belongs to the one only God. The *second* forbids our having low, material, or sensuous notions of

God, and all practices that tend to impair our belief and recognition of his pure, spiritual nature. The *third* forbids all profane or undevout use of the names, titles, and authoritative sentences of God, and all practices that tend to impair the awful supreme respect in which those divine terms, with their significations, should be held. The *fourth* enjoins our worship and pious remembrance of God our only Creator and Lord, especially on the Sabbath-day, which he has consecrated for that holy purpose; and all practices that tend to impair our devotion generally, but, particularly, our proper observance of the day he has set apart for himself.

These commandments are given in a negative form, but they enjoin positively: 1. Supreme acknowledgment of God. 2. Practical belief in his essential spirituality, that is, spirituality of essence or mode of being. 3. Reverence, internal and external, for the authority of God, and all that relates to the exercise of his authority. 4. Worship of God, internal and external, and cultivation of whatever means he has ordained for our worship of him. The order of these precepts and of the duties they enjoin is natural and necessary, showing us that the Decalogue is not merely a collection of commandments, but a system of morals in which each has its appropriately relative place.

The **FIRST** of these is the subject of our lesson for to-day. "*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*"

The idea of God is fundamental to all religion and morals; for religion is the honoring of God, and morals the obeying of God. Proof of the existence and character of God is not in place here, that having been given in another part of our exposition, and now by the Catechism is considered established. But it is

required that we know what is meant by the term *God*.

FIRST : The use of the word in the plural and the phrase "other gods" show that God is not a personal name, but a title, or official appellation, which truly belongs to the One Supreme only, but has been and may be usurped by others, or falsely applied to others ; as the apostle says (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6) : "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth as there be gods many and lords many ; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, — and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." The word rendered god, or gods, in the Old Testament, literally signifies *high ones*, and thus comparatively is applied to angels, and even to princes or exalted personages among men, as David says : "I will praise thee with my whole heart ; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee." But it is more frequently given to the imaginary beings, or their visible representatives, whom men, departing from true religion, worshipped and invoked in the place of the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forever. These false gods were numerous, each nation and often each family having their tutelary divinities ; nay, there was not a kingdom or process of nature, not a wind or stream or mountain or tree, that had not, according to the popular creed, its particular divinity. Such an ascription of divine power to more than one supposed being, or division of it among many, was a gross insult to him whose will is the sole efficient energy pervading all things, as he created all things, and is, therefore, forbidden by the commandment. The Sovereign Giver of the law in his preface distinguishes

himself from the gods of the nations, saying to Israel: "I am the LORD [Jehovah] *thy* God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." By which he does not allow the gods of the nations to be real, but, asserting his own as the sole divinity, declares that he has taken Israel under his almighty care, revealing himself by his name, JEHOVAH. This was the title by which he required his people to worship him; yet it is no more than God a personal name, but one descriptive of his nature. Attempts have been made to define its meaning, but without satisfactory result; that which approaches nearest is parallel to the description of himself when he revealed his presence to Moses, saying, "I AM THAT I AM," — an expression declaring at once the eternity, the self-existence and incomprehensibleness of his being. It is well here to note that the most ancient of the *Theistic* philosophers, whom we find far back in the primitive sects of mankind after the flood, as the Chaldean, from whom the Platonists and Gnostics learned their uses of language, held it impious to give a name to the Highest, or to attempt in any way a description of his essence, but called him THE ONE. It is also remarkable, that, among cultivated nations at least, though they worshipped many inferior deities, whose favor they invoked and whose anger they deprecated, there was, as there is now among the idolatrous peoples of the East, a belief in one original divinity, whom they did not worship because they thought him too sublimely absorbed in his own perfections to care for them or their service. Nay, there is sound reasoning for believing that idolatry, at the beginning of its deplorable evils, was not an

invention of false deities by the mind seeking after divinity, but a departure from the worship of the true God who had revealed himself to the fathers of our race. Nor was it so much a denial of the true God as the putting between themselves and him inferior beings, or powers, who exercised over them immediately an authority and control derived from the original one. This is seen in the fact that Aaron, when he, at the impious demand of the Israelites for gods to go before them, copied, in what our translators call a golden calf, the Egyptian emblem of the productive or agricultural power, and then proclaimed a feast in honor of the idol as a feast to Jehovah (Exodus xxxii. 4, 5), he meant, and the people understood him to mean, not that they denied the supremacy of Jehovah, but that they worshipped him as represented by the idol. So the apostle (Romans i. 20–23) says of the heathen: “When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, [that is, they did not give him the spiritual homage due to an infinite spirit,] neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God [that is, the eternal, immaterial God] into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Whatever was afterwards the utterly brutish reliance on such dumb idols and gross fictions of their depraved fancy, they did not intend at the beginning anything more than to represent by such emblems the power of the true God, whose spiritual perfections they were too gross to apprehend. Hence we see that the real nature of idolatry is nothing else than a depraved tendency of sensualized man to give to things which are seen the trust and regard

which should go through them and above them to the invisible God, to rest in the creature rather than in the Creator, and rely on the palpable means instead of the spiritual directing cause. This is in exact accordance with the definition of idolatry as given by the answer to the 95th Question.

"Idolatry is, instead of, or beside, the one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive [invent, imagine] or to have any other object in which men place their trust." Whatever be the object to which we give the trust or any part of the trust due to the Infinite Supreme, thus putting it between us and him, is in the commandment called a *god*. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

We are now prepared to learn,

SECONDLY: *What God doth enjoin in the first command.*

The answer in the Catechism is very instructive and particular, showing that by the word *trust*, in the definition of idolatry, are included all those dispositions and acts of the soul comprehended by the worship and service of the one true and only God. It (the answer) has two parts,—the one teaching us what the command forbids, the other what it requires. If we ascertain the truths in the latter, we shall clearly understand those in the former.

I. We, or, as our church bids us each answer for himself, "I," must "learn rightly to know the only true God; trust in him alone; with humility and patience submit to him; expect all good things from him only; love, fear, and glorify him with my whole heart, so that I renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit [do] even the least thing contrary to his will."

Here are several divisions of the great duty we owe to God.

1. Right knowledge of God. The command expressly forbids any other gods but the one Jehovah or Lord. To imagine him, either from ignorance or waywardness, to be in any respect other than he is, is not to acknowledge the true God, but to set up in his place a creature of our own fancy ; and as we cannot know God otherwise than from himself, it is our primary duty to know what he is from his own revelation of himself in the Scriptures ; therefore our ideas of God are true only so far as they are conformable in character and degree to those given of him in his own word. There are mysteries in the divine nature as far above our comprehension as the infinite is above the finite ; but the Spirit, which “searcheth even the deep things of God,” has declared all that it is profitable for us to know this side of heaven, and no more. There is no reasoning beyond this, because we have no facts from which to draw inferences, no data on which to found our conclusions. We have no more right to go beyond what is written than we have to withhold our belief from what is written. The God of the Bible is the one only true God.

2. Trust in him. The Scripture reveals him as infinitely perfect in all his attributes ; and, therefore, his absolute government must be infinitely wise and just, and, in Christ, full of goodness and mercy toward all who acknowledge him to be their God. Hence, if we rightly know God, our confidence will be complete, unhesitating, unfaltering, and full of peace. “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.” Such trust will make us humbly and patiently submissive to all his

dispensations, however trying or unintelligible, towards us ; for are we not wholly dependent on him, and is it not his omnipotent, unchangeable will to provide for his children's best good in the future as at the present, in time and in eternity ? When there is perfect confidence in God, there can be neither discontent, impatience, or despondency. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" ; therefore the past, the present, the future in his almighty hands are right. Therefore our Lord taught us to pray to him as our Father in heaven, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ;" and himself, our divine example of human piety, when passing through his unutterable grief for our atonement, took the cup into his trembling hand, saying, "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

3. The love of our whole hearts. Love is the grand attraction by which God unites all holy, intelligent creatures to himself, and in him to each other. It is the union which secures the harmony of the godly in Christ. We love that which we admire and delight to contemplate ; and God is the original and infinite perfection of all that is worthy of our admiration and delight ; therefore should he have our affectionate, glad adoration : we love those from whom we receive the elements and means of our happiness ; and God is the author and giver of all good : we love those who love us, and have fellowship with us ; and God loves us with an everlasting, boundless, tender love, as his creatures, his servants, and children ; therefore should we give him our first, best, highest love ; nay, our hearts should be so filled with love to him that no love to any creature can find room within it, except as it is com-

prehended and sanctified by supreme affection, esteem, gratitude, and desire for the one only true God.

4. Fear. Not the terror which the power of an enemy inspires, nor the servile dread which forces submission to a hard, irresistible master ; but a reverence filling the heart that is filled with love, an awful homage to his sovereign majesty, humble veneration of his infinite attributes, jealous caution lest we offend against his will, and a constant sense of his holy presence searching our thoughts and taking account of all our doings. The devils tremble while they believe in the vindictive authority of the one only true God ; but the angels veil their faces and worship close to the glory of his throne : so his true children never love him more or obey him more gladly than when, bowing lowest at his feet, they adore him Lord over all, and acknowledge that in him alone they “ live and move and have their being.”

5. The result of this knowledge, trust, love, and fear of God, the only God, is an *entire consecration to his service* ; or, as the Catechism has it, we “ glorify him with our whole heart, so that we renounce and forsake all creatures rather than commit the least thing contrary to his will.” God is our creator, therefore he is our owner ; he is our only king, therefore we are his subjects alone ; he is our only teacher, therefore we should learn from him alone ; he is our only benefactor, therefore our whole lives should be thank-offerings to his love ; he is before all things, and by him all things consist, therefore is he alone “ worthy to receive honor and glory and blessing.” So the true believer in the one only God makes it the purpose of his heart, as it is the purpose of his creation, to glorify God

in all his thoughts and words and ways, that his Maker may delight in him, and men, "seeing his good works, may glorify his Father which is in heaven."

II. The sin forbidden by the command is the opposite of all this. It "enjoins," as the Catechism says, "That I, as sincerely as I desire the salvation of my soul, avoid and flee from all *idolatry*;" and idolatry, as defined in answer to the next question, is the having any other object of trust than the one true God. Whenever, therefore, we give to any creature that which belongs to God only, we are idolaters, and the object of such impious trust is an idol. It matters not what it is: an image cut out of wood or stone, an imagination of our own as to what God is or should be, the laws or processes of nature, worldly possessions, honor or opinions, relatives or friends, human skill, wisdom, or power, — whatever it be, if we so set our hearts upon it as to bring it between us and God, it is an idol. In these days Christianity has so far enlightened us Protestants that none of you, my hearers, would do such an absurd thing as to set up an altar, offer sacrifices, and make prayers to any created thing. Yet we are scarcely less idolaters if, for any reason, we turn away from God and put our trust elsewhere, instead of depending on him alone, and on him as he has made himself known by his divine word. Idolatry is a great sin, but atheism is, if possible, a greater. It is a gross, profane absurdity to worship a false god; but what shall be said of those who worship no God? Yet such is their atheism, who do not by a hearty homage, trust, and affection glorify him in whom their "breath is and in whose hands are all their ways." There are few irreligious persons among the heathen; such as

their religion is, they practise it ; but among us the irreligious are many : they know too much to worship images ; they are not willing to worship the God of the Bible ; and, therefore, they worship no God at all. God is not in their thoughts ; they do not seek him, or trust in him, or obey him, or give him glory. They “love the world and the things of the world,” but “the love of the Father is not in them.” Will not God be avenged of such sinners as these ?

There has always been a disposition in mankind to pry into the future, or things hidden from mere human knowledge ; hence the practice in all ages and countries of what is comprehended under the general name of *divination*. The term itself shows that it is an attempt, from extraordinary signs in nature which is under divine control, from some spiritual being superior in knowledge to ourselves, or mortal supposed to be supernaturally endowed or inspired, to learn that which the true God has not revealed. It is most probable, that, as idolatry was originally a departure from the true God, so *divination* began with profane attempts to counterfeit the miraculous signs and portents by which God, in early ages, made known his presence and his will, as also the prophecies which he caused to be uttered by men immediately under his impulse. The origin of *magic* in Chaldea, near the cradle of our postdiluvian race, whence it passed into India (where it received that name), Egypt, and other parts of the world, is a strong indication of this. The arts of such divination have been so various and many, that volumes could not enumerate them ; and the Catechism makes mention of only four or five.

1. *Sorcery*, which is a resort to the evil spirit,

who, according to a very early belief, was a being of great malignity in power and wisdom, rivalling the spirit of good. A modern name for it is diabolism, devilism, or the black art. To ask counsel or aid of the devil is flat insult to the true God.

2. *Soothsaying*, as it is in the Dutch (*waer segginge*), or, as it is in the German,* superstitious resort to charms or incantations (*abergläubische Sagen*), comprehends all use of enchantments and consultation of persons pretending skill in such deceits.

3. *Superstition*, which is an over-credulity, attributing, without reason or scriptural faith, meanings and effects to things and occurrences with which they have no connection, — as, thinking Friday an unlucky day, or a comet ominous of disaster, or that chances at cards, or fortune-telling tables, show any facts beyond ordinary providence and the revealed Scriptures. (It is noteworthy here, that superstition is distinguished from veneration of the true God by always producing gloom and dread. It is “the spirit of fear,” as opposed to “the spirit of love and of power and of a sound mind.”) In a word, whatever notion or act, especially in attempting to get a knowledge of, or control over, things not shown us by God in nature or the Bible, which is not consistent with a simple trust in his overruling providence and grace. We must not delude our pride by thinking such profane follies peculiar to heathen nations and darker ages. Superstition, in various forms, is rife among us at this very time, and will continue to prevail until Christian faith, enlightening reason, has cast out all power of the devil from our hearts. In-

* There is a variation here from the German in the Dutch version.

deed, it would seem to have received a new impulse, and to meet with ready dupes, since so-called spiritualism, (which is nothing else than necromancy, or supernatural communication with departed spirits,) the silliest of all divining contrivances, has obtained so wide a credence, and that even among cultivated minds. No true Christian, worshipping the true God, should give the slightest heed to such miserable impiety, nor will he be ensnared by it so long as he maintains a lively faith in the promises of his heavenly Father; for then he will believe none but the God of the Bible, and desire to know no more than what God teaches him. Hence our church, at the celebration of the Lord's supper, solemnly and peremptorily bars from its precious privileges "all enchanters, diviners, charmers, and those who confide [or put faith] in such enchantments." Let us, beloved, seeing how weak our human nature is, beware, lest we also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from our own steadfastness. "Let us walk in the light as children of the light, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

4. *Invocation of saints or other creatures.* This sin is pronounced by our church, in her form for the Lord's supper, as not at all compatible with genuine faith. In both places, worship of deceased saints and even angels, by invoking their aid or asking them to intercede for us with God, as practised and approved by the Papal church, is particularly aimed at and denounced. It is nothing else than a practice of ancient heathenism, which made gods of dead heroes, or kings, or wise men, and therefore should have no place among Christians. It is the extreme of irrationalism

to dream that a human spirit can have the omnipresent heart-searching faculty of God, so as to hear our prayers and know our thoughts ; nor is there a word of Scripture to encourage a thought that God has ever committed, or will commit, such power upon any creature. There is one, "and but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who is also Immanuel God with us." It is a fiction of antichrist, to give to any other the prerogative which is Christ's alone, and therefore violates the first and greatest of all the commandments.

You see, then, brethren, how great a blessing we enjoy in the Scriptures of our Christian faith. "The world by wisdom [of its own] knew not God ;" and when unwilling to have his holy image in their thoughts, they ceased to worship him, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth ; they sank into all the irrational, degrading, cruel, lascivious vices of heathenism. We pity their stupidity ; we abhor their practices. Yet such were our own ancestors, and such should we ourselves be, but for the light of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Jehovah, who led his ancient Israel out of the house of bondage, has led us and our fathers out of worse slavery. Let us bless his holy name, and, offering him the undivided homage of our hearts, entreat him, while we rely only on his grace, to keep us from falling.

Remember, also, dearly beloved, that it needs not a sculptured image, or invocation of a demon, or charm, or incantation, to constitute idolatry. Whatever comes between us and God, receiving the trust which should be put in him alone, or shutting out from us the blessed

light which shines in his gracious countenance, is an idòl.

Nay, if we do not know him and Jesus Christ, worshipping him, through our only Mediator, with all the love of our hearts, all the adoration of our minds, all the strength of our souls, we are idolaters, because we may be sure that some creature has come between us and him. Let these awful words, O Holy Spirit, be written deep in our hearts : —

“THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.”

LECTURE XLV.

ON THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF IDOLATRY.



THIRTY-FIFTH LORD'S DAY.

ON THE

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF IDOLATRY.

THE religious worship of any object other than the Infinite Supreme is so contrary to pure reason, and the prevalence of the monstrous error, where an immediate or a written revelation has not shed its divine light, so nearly universal, that the origin and history of idolatry should excite a grave curiosity in the mind of every thoughtful Christian. The evident proneness of our race to the deadly sin, and the deep moral degradation by which it is infallibly accompanied and followed, render the inquiry one of the utmost practical importance. There is the more need of thoroughly investigating the subject, from the fact, too little known, that the specious but deadly sophistries of infidel speculators, especially those of the French School during the last century, have been suffered to pervade the treatises of Christian students, and thence the opinions of Christians generally. We must refute and utterly repudiate their falsities before we can take the first step in the right direction; nor will the refutation be difficult if we meet them at their starting-point, and compare their imaginary data with the statements of Scripture, and the corroboration of those statements by reason and history.

The grand falsity of these philosophers, and the basis on which they have built all their scheme, is the assumption that barbarism and ignorance was the original

state of man ; and that, by the force of natural reason acting on the inconveniences and growing necessities of such a state, they have evolved the cultivation of the soil, the laws of property, general virtue, the combinations of government, in a word, the whole social system ; nay, ignorant in a great degree of natural causes, and stimulated by a desire of happiness, which the least experience taught them was beyond their ability to secure, they sought the aid and deprecated the wrath of a higher power, and so constructed a religion in the worship, first, of perceptible forces, as, light, wind, the flow of waters, vegetation, — then, of imaginary beings, invisible but ever active, controlling those forces. These they represented to the eye by various forms, principally an exaggeration of the human, grotesque, or beautiful, according to their taste, clothing them with appropriate attributes and symbols. When knowledge increased, and cultivated reflection showed them the need of a yet higher authority to which men should feel themselves responsible, they attained the ideas of a Supreme Being and a future state of reward and punishment. The more atheistical of the anti-scriptural theorists ridicule all such efforts after religion as slavishly superstitious, and denounce religion itself as an imposture of priests and tyrants combining to hold the vulgar in subjection by visionary terrors ; hence the atheism of revolutionary France ; but those who are not willing to deny God a place in the universe, contend that all religion has been a legitimate, gradual discovery by the human soul seeking after truth, as the poet expresses it : —

“ Through nature up to nature's God.”

This scheme, as you see, finds man living apart in a

wilderness, scarcely raised above the wild brutes, subsisting by the chase or fishing, and on vegetables of spontaneous growth, — then, as families increased, and these resources became inadequate, contriving the arts of life and the morals requisite for communities, of which religion is the highest. Two facts are thus admitted, which we note, because useful to our future argument and fatal to that of our opponents: first, that man had a beginning; secondly, that he has a natural tendency towards religion, as necessary to the development of his better condition. The human savage could not have sprung into being uncaused, and with filial instinct must have sought his author.

The scheme is, however, contradicted by all history and the traditions of our race. We have no accredited instance of a people elevating themselves out of barbarism to civilization without foreign aid. Some plausible attempts have been made to adduce instances of the kind, as the ancient Mexicans and the Greeks, the civilization of both of whom have been claimed to be indigenous; but, putting aside other facts which our time will not allow us to cite, the great fact cannot be questioned, that there was civilization in the world antecedent to their rise. The source from which the Mexican sprang, and their early condition, are too deeply obscure to permit any theory of their growth, though the character of their monuments strongly savors of an eastern transoceanic kindred. But with regard to European, or, indeed, the whole of the old-world civilization, we can — unless we ignore the universal voice of classical antiquity, backed by proof in the names of places, rivers, mountains, and cities, fixing unalterably the main truth of their traditions — trace

the transfer of grafts of civilization from the farthest east to the ultimate north. Greece avowed her derivation of culture from Asia and Egypt. The very names about the Athenian Acropolis perpetuate those of the Egyptian immigrants who introduced laws and arts among her aboriginal Pelasgi. From the beginning of her annals, down to the northern invasion, her people, philosophers as well as the illiterate, regarded the eastern lands much as we Americans regard Europe. Their religious system and ceremonies were to a great extent the same as the Egyptian. The most trusted oracle of all was that of Jupiter Ammon in the Libyan desert, and he was clearly the Osiris of Egypt and probably the Ham of the Ethiopians; while the Egyptians themselves frankly owned that they had derived their system, religious and philosophical, from a far more remote period. We all know the influence of Greece over Italy, and of Italy over northern Europe; nay, that maritime part of Italy about the modern Naples and eastward to the sites of Crotona and Lybaris, are full of evidences that Egyptian influences were there long before those of Greece. Similar, though not so distinct, traces of Phœnician emigration may be found in more northern Europe as in Southern France and in Ireland, or, if we credit acute ethnologists, in various other regions. From Europe civilization has come here to the western continent, and is now rolling back the tide over the decayed nations from which it originally flowed. All this, and in many ways we have no time to particularize, points backward and backward until we reach the acknowledged seat of the first human philosophy in Chaldea, close to the region which Scripture makes the second cradle of the race, where the

great temple of Babel, or Baal, or Bel, or Belus, was built, and whence was the dispersion of the nations. We find the notion of man's original barbarism nowhere in antiquity, but always the reverse, — a chief proof of which was the general traditionary belief in a golden age when man was fresh from the creating power, of which Hesiod, as old as Homer, or, as many think, older, gives a glowing description, accompanied with many other asserted facts corroboratory of our position. Allow us but the one fact, that man had a beginning, and his origin must be attributed to a creator, — then it is impossible to believe that the intelligent cause who gave him such a wonderful being, physically, intellectually, and morally, would have introduced his creature into the world a mere savage and without knowledge of Him “in whom his breath was and in whose hands were all his ways,” or, as the heathen poet, quoted by Paul on Areopagus, says, whose “offspring” he was.

It is remarkable also, and as susceptible of clear proof as it is remarkable, that men, so far from becoming more moral and religious as they descended from antiquity, actually grew worse and worse. This was seen in the history of their philosophy, as well as in that of the people; nor were they ever weary — philosophers, poets, historians, and moralists — of praising the ancient manners and regretting their decay. In the same manner we hear them always ascribing their religious habits to the example of the past, never claiming them as inventions of their own. One of the finest passages of Plato, respecting the existence of divine power and the duty of worship, is an indignant burst of astonishment that any could doubt the gods, when

they all had been taught the elements of religion on their nurses' laps and at their mother's knee, and by the unanimous example of all people, civilized and barbarian, who worship in temples and bow down at the rising and setting of the sun. A clear acknowledgment that such faith was traditionary. Indeed, so universal was this reference to divinity, that all the older, more eminent legislators and teachers claimed the respect of the multitude on account of a divine inspiration. The founders of states boasted a divine lineage. Lycurgus in Greece, as Numa in Rome, asserted themselves to be the mediums of divine instruction. Pythagoras, at once the head of a sect and the founder of a philosophical republic, who drew his mystical doctrines from Egypt, was called by his disciples the Son of God, and assumed miraculous gifts. Plato, on whose infant lips a swarm of bees lovingly clustered, was on similar testimony virgin-born; and even the grave, good Socrates had, as he asserted, his guardian demon. The old poets, who were also the historians and the prophets of early times, readily received the epithet "divine" from their supposed inspiration. It were easy to cite a multitude of like instances, showing that the human mind has never been satisfied with mere human authority, but has always demanded divine testimonies to moral doctrines.

If, as we have shown, the common belief of mankind has been always against the idea that barbarism was man's original condition, and that his progress has been toward refinement and religion, the books of the Scriptures contradict it even more positively. We see the two brothers near the gate of Eden, — one a tiller of the ground, the other a shepherd. The earliest work

recorded of Noah after the deluge was the planting of a vineyard. The circumcised patriarchs, because pilgrims without a country, were migratory herdsmen, while the farthest records show us Egypt eminent for its agricultural wealth, and ruled by shepherd-kings. In vain do we search for a barbarous people in those remote ages. Barbarism was of a later date. Adam, who conversed with God, his Creator, as a child with his father, must have learned from his infinite Teacher the great truths of religion, and cannot be supposed to have forgotten them in his fall, but must have taught them to his multiplying descendants till the close of his long term. Between him and the calling of Abraham, we see that there were needed only three — Methuselah, Noah, and Shem — to hand down the primeval doctrines.

Religion, therefore, was no discovery of reason, no gradual development. True religion was the original faith of men in the divine testimony. This is in accordance with the account given by the apostle Paul in the first chapter of the Romans, where he tells us: “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they worshipped him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed

the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." Here the apostle, of his inspired wisdom, declares that the nations had originally a knowledge of the true God; but unwilling to retain a sense of his holy spiritual majesty, yet unable to banish all thought of divinity, they turned their worship to senseless images of man and brutes, and even reptiles; and, therefore, God suffered them to lose his true idea, and in consequence the most deplorable immoralities took the place of that virtue which the worship of a spiritual God enforces. Idolatry was not the attempt of a barbarous mind to seek divinity, but the departure of civilized, instructed mind from God, and barbarism itself the fall of mankind from original civilization.

The theory of the Bible is corroborated by the facts of history.

We mark, however, more particularly that it was the spirituality of the divine nature which offended the corrupted heart of man. A spiritual Creator, infinitely above the passions and appetites of corporeal life, and the pure ruler over the creatures he had made, held them in fear and restraint from the sensualities they desired to enjoy; and, therefore, they exerted their wicked ingenuity to darken their hearts against spiritual holy light. They could not do without religion altogether; the evidences of divine power were too

strong, their dependence on power higher than their own, too manifest ; the habit, grown almost instinctive, to pray and worship when calamities threatened or successes were doubtful, could not be repressed ; and so they set up before their eyes symbolical images which they worshipped, not as they would have said had they been questioned, because they considered those senseless shapes to possess divine attributes, but because they suggested the ideas of God to their mind. It was the same error as that into which the Papist has fallen, who will tell you that he does not worship the crucifix he holds before him, but the Saviour whom the image brings eloquently to his remembrance. We have a striking illustration of this in the Israelites at the foot of Sinai ; who, impatient of delay when the glorious sign of the divine presence, which had led them out of Egypt, rested long on the top of the mount, demanded of Aaron that he should make them gods which should go before them ; and Aaron copied the Egyptian symbol of productive force, the agricultural ox, or, as our translators render it, a calf. That neither they nor Aaron considered the golden calf to be a conscious god, but only a symbol of divine power, is seen in the fact that Moses proclaimed a feast unto the LORD (Jehovah), the name of Israel's covenant God.

The purpose of idolatry being to get rid of a spiritual divinity, from which moral attributes, condemning their sensual vices, were inseparable, but to retain the physical power of divinity for their selfish purposes, they set up images symbolical of the forces visible in nature. In other respects than superhuman power, they made their gods animal and subject to animal passions like themselves, — nay, like the brutes. The

least acquaintance with heathen mythology proves the truth of Aristotle's saying, that "such as men wish the gods to be, so they make them." For the same reason not only did the imputed sensualities of the gods encourage similar impurities among their worshippers, but sensuality of the grossest character became prescribed parts of idolatrous worship; and not a few of their most observed festivals and ceremonies were most abominable imitations and representations of acts on the part of their gods of which, as the apostle Paul says in particular reference to them, it is a shame even to speak. The first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a history true to the letter of the Gentile idolatry.

They retained, as we have said, the idea of divine force — the motive power, if I may so speak — in their gods; and this is the key to the philosophy of idolatry; though in more ignorant nations, or where the corruption became most brutal, the traces of it are less distinct. Thus the first object of idolatrous worship was fire, or the great central fire, the sun. They were led first to this, no doubt, by the fact that God himself had made supernatural fire or flame or brightness, "glory," as it is termed by the sacred writers, the symbol of his presence. But they soon went farther; and as they saw the sun, by his active heat, calling forth the fertility of the earth, they learned to worship productive force in that glorious sign and medium of divine power. The earth, for the reason that she bears the fruit of the sun's genial influences, received the name of mother; and out of this marriage grew the widely extended worship of productive energy under masculine and feminine symbols, known as the Bacchic or

Phallic system, the main elements of which exist to this day in the idolatries of India, and spread themselves from Egypt over the ancient historical world. Of this most popular, because most sensual of all idolatries, it is not becoming for us to say more ; but could we detail its nature and its mystic ceremonies as they were practised by the classical nations, as well as many less cultivated, down to as late a period as the sixth century after Christ, all would bear out the statement we have made.

In process of time this productive energy came to be divided among many new inferior gods who were, to the minds of the common people at least, the controllers of various departments in nature and art and intellectual exercise. The sea, the winds, the farm, poetry, wisdom, peace, war, all had their tutelary or peculiar deities, while each mountain, stream, and tree had its guardian nymphs.

The primeval faith had left traces on the traditional conscience of mankind too deep to be eradicated, and accordingly we find a general acknowledgment that vice provoked the anger, and virtue had the approbation of the powers that rule human destinies. There are passages in the philosophical writings and the tragic poems containing sentiments and truths which approach in purity and sublimity the inspired Scriptures ; but the philosopher painfully felt the lack of evidence on which to base a confident trust, and the strain of the highest poetry places retributive justice above the gods themselves, and even ruling them as by eternal fates. Every scholar is familiar with the mysterious destiny which, through all the tragic and heroic poems, is made to pursue with calamitous vengeance, yet as a

blind necessity, the perpetrators of greater crimes and their descendants. This does not, however, deny the fact that the aim of idolatry in transferring worship from a spiritual supreme to sensible, material objects, was to deprive divinity of moral attributes. They dreaded divine justice, and when conscious of guilt, sought to avert its wrath by sacrifices and purifications, but they never adored it as a venerable claim on their homage and trust. The prayer of the people never was for purity of heart and strength of virtue; in a word, there was no love of holiness in all their worship, no practical recognition of it in all their religion; and this, we repeat, was the reason why the morals of heathenism were so abominably depraved, their very gods, because of their own vices, becoming so low and contemptible as to be made the butt of satirists and farce-writers. Even while they persecuted to death teachers who, like Socrates, endeavored to restore the moral authority of heaven over the popular theogony, and while the altars of magnificent temples were deluged with the blood of hecatombs, amidst the smoke of the costliest perfumes, the audience in the theatre roared in laughter at the scurrilous jokes of Aristophanes or Plautus, who were never so witty or recklessly bold as when ridiculing the inhabitants of Olympus, from the father of gods and men down to sooty Vulcan.

The object of this discourse will have been gained, if its argument, for obvious reasons more brief than another occasion might allow, has served to show the immense practical importance of our Lord's divine doctrine: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." There is in our natures, even when renewed, but as yet imperfectly

sanctified, a constant struggle between the spirit and the flesh, which prompts men to substitute external, visible forms for a spiritual religion. The tendency to such a corruption of worship is not peculiar to heathenism, so called, but has exerted its baneful sway under the name of Christianity, as the rites of the Papists, and those who imitate them, too plainly show ; nor is it altogether absent from the straitest sects of Protestantism. It is the vice of our fallen nature against which we have all constantly to struggle, and shows itself in every attempt to have the form of godliness while we deny the power thereof. Religion, to be true, must be a spiritual worship of the infinite Spirit. His authority searching our inmost thoughts, his love ruling our moral affections, alone can control the practice of our lives. Hence a godly life is throughout the Scripture a spiritual life, and is begun, continued, consummated by the Spirit of God dwelling in and bearing witness with our spirits, thereby enabling us by a divine strength to resist and overcome the degrading tendencies of our carnal natures. Hence faith, the main instrument of the Holy Ghost for our sanctification, is a belief of God's moral truth, discerning things invisible and eternal. Such belief alone can make us closely acquainted with God, purge our souls from the grossness of sensualism, and overcome the world by the infinitely transcendent attractions of eternal fellowship with God. Hence the first commandment of the law demands of us faith in the absolute supremacy of the one only God ; the second insists on an equal recognition of his spiritual essence, and forbids all practices springing from a desire to rid ourselves of the

moral restraints which his spiritual nature imposes upon all who fear and adore him. It is only in this broad light that we can see the full meaning of the second commandment and its true object in forbidding all idolatry.

LECTURE XLVI.
ON PROFANE SWEARING.

THIRTY-SIXTH LORD'S DAY.

ON PROFANE SWEARING.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” — **EXODUS xx. 7.**

IT were very painful to think that, among this vast crowd of intelligent and educated young men,* there could be found one who denied or even doubted the being of God. So deeply is the great Idea impressed upon human reason, so clearly is it announced to us by revelation, so fully is it demonstrated by the admirable economy of nature, so necessary is it to philosophical argument as the source of all law, so essential to social morals as the universal, supreme, only sufficient motive of virtue, that we regard an atheist as a monster, our pity for whose wretchedness is wellnigh swallowed up in disgust at his deformity. Yet, my friends, when we acknowledge, as we do, the existence of God, we confess that he is our God; our Creator; therefore, our Owner, our Ruler; therefore, our Judge. Let us suspend our officious denunciation of the atheist, and ask, What are we, if, believing in God, we live as though there were no God? if, while he speaks in his word, we deafen our ears to his voice, forget him amidst the countless miracles of his works, and, stifling his witness in our consciences, do as we list, careless of our duty and allegiance, disregardful alike of his smile or his frown, his eternal rewards or everlasting damnation.

* This lecture was one of a course of sermons, preached by the clergymen of New York and other cities, before the Young Men's Christian Association of New York.

But criminal as such neglect of God is, there is a sin yet more aggravated, an offence against his majesty far more heinous, more than contempt, a defiance of his almighty wrath, so common that the atmosphere of our land is loaded with its enormity; nor can we easily believe that there are none even in this most respectable audience stained by its guilt. It is a profane use of the divine names and sentences in ordinary conversation. No apology need be made for bringing a subject of such importance to your attention, since God himself has given it a place among the four great commandments which immediately respect his own honor. That commandment shall be our text:—

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” — EXODUS xx. 7.

We have here two things for our solemn consideration:—

FIRST: *What is meant by taking the name of the Lord our God in vain.*

SECONDLY: *The extreme wickedness of such profanity. “The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”*

FIRST: *What is meant by “taking the name of the Lord our God in vain”?*

By the *name* of the Lord God, according to the idiom of Scripture, is intended not merely the appellation of the Divine Being, but also his supreme authority and power. Thus: “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” The Saviour did his works in his “Father’s name”;

and by his direction we pray, "Hallowed be thy name." The simple mention of the Deity should remind us of his claim upon our worship and obedience; yet the text goes farther, and enjoins a reverence not only for the supreme himself, but for all that bears the impress of his majesty: "Thou shalt not treat lightly the authority of the Lord thy God." The prohibition is, therefore, very extensive, forbidding not only perjury, which is an appealing to the Great Searcher of hearts while uttering a lie, but also all irreverence whatsoever toward his names, titles, attributive epithets, sentences, words, and institutions.

As, however, it would be impossible at present to treat of the whole subject, our consideration will be of *profaneness in common conversation*.

By such profaneness is meant,

1. Light and impious protestations by any of the Divine names on trivial occasions. These are correctly termed *oaths* in every sense of that momentous word. The profane swearer may not reflect upon what he is saying; but, in fact, he is taking God to witness of what he utters. It is not the place or the occasion which makes an oath, but the assertion by the name of God. How awful the blasphemy of invoking the Most High on slight pretences, or of using his venerable titles without a solemn sense of their tremendous meaning!

2. The thoughtless mention of the divine name in idle or hasty exclamations, such as, "My God!" "O Lord!" "God bless me!" and the like. If there be any meaning in the use of such phrases, it is an invocation of the divine presence and favor, which cannot be our feeling unless we have some proper idea of his infinite character; and if we utter them without any

consideration of their import, we grossly insult him who is very jealous of his name.

3. An irreverent use of those words which are employed by God to denote his wrathful sentences, as damn, damnation, curse, hell. These and like words are so appropriated to the divine dispensations of his justice against transgressors of his law, that they are always, with a few inconsiderable exceptions, so understood. What a contempt does it argue of his avenging anger, when we invoke it petulantly or flippantly on our own heads; or cruelly and maliciously desire to make God the minister of our excited passions by invoking it on the heads of others!

4. A wanton use of scriptural texts or expressions by way of witticism or facetiousness. The language of Scripture is peculiar, and, at the same time, familiar to us, so that we readily recognize an imitation of it; and all the point of the miserable jest lies in the resemblance to the words of the Holy Ghost, for the closer the resemblance, the droller it is thought to be. This form of profaneness has too much prevalence, even among those who profess better and should know better; nor can it be sufficiently condemned, for how shocking should be a travesty of those sacred words in which we are accustomed to hear God speaking of mercy and judgment, or a parody of his most gracious teachings! No one can thus sport with holy words who has a respect for the authority of Scripture; nor are we able entirely to divest a text, which we have heard so abused, of the unworthy association. It may be said that no profanity is intended; but how can it be otherwise than profane to use the language of eternity in speaking of trifles, or to raise an idle laugh

at the expense of respect for the word of God? The Mohammedan, who will not tread upon written or printed letters lest he might trample on a saying of his prophet, may teach professed Christians a lesson; and, surely, he, who commanded Moses to put off his shoes from his feet as he stood before the burning bush, because the very ground was holy from the presence of the Lord, will avenge such an insulting approach to that holy word by which he reveals himself as a jealous God.

Having thus briefly defined profanity in common conversation, let us now consider,

SECONDLY: *Its extreme wickedness.* “The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

1. It is an evidence of a heart deplorably insensible to the character of the Most High. It is the name of the Lord our God which is so profaned. It is a rule of human as well as divine wisdom, to give honor where honor is due. Respect to our superiors in lawful authority has ever been held necessary for the order of society. Filial reverence is the first lesson of filial duty. Our judges on the bench and our legislators in their halls are protected by privileges and addressed by titles, to which, as private persons, they have no claim. This deference is extended to all who are distinguished by age or wisdom or worth. A hoary head is a crown of honor in the eyes of all but the utterly abandoned. To treat with disrespect the counsels of the wise is to argue ourselves fools, and to speak lightly of the good is to prove ourselves depraved. How much more is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, entitled to our reverential and awful re-

spect! He is our Creator, who formed us out of dust, animated us with intelligent and immortal spirits, upholds and preserves us by his constant hand; our Ruler, whose authority is over all, and from whose dominion there is no escape; our Judge, by whose laws and sentences our eternal state is to be fixed, and from whose decision there is no appeal; the infinitely glorious Being, to the majesty of whose holy perfections there is no bound, — at the thought of whom the very devils tremble, — before whose brightness seraphim and cherubim veil their faces as they adore; whose throne is ever surrounded by innumerable hosts of prostrate worshippers, and to whom universal creation, except the blasphemer, is ever sending up hymns of praise, — yet it is his name that man, the worm of the dust, the creature of his hand, dependent upon him even for the air he breathes, profanes in the burst of anger, in peevish impatience, in wanton thoughtlessness, in the ribald jest. O what must be the depravity of his heart who can stand upon earth, from which God took him, and beneath the heavens which are telling God's glory, and in the midst of God's bountiful, beautiful works, yet use that tongue, which God taught speech, to blaspheme the holy, the just, and the good Author and Sovereign of all!

2. It is a direct insult to God. In other sins we rebel against the divine government; but in profaneness we defy God to his face, we rush before his terrible presence, we stand fronting his burning eye, and fling our challenge at the foot of his throne; we mock at his curse, we scorn his threatenings, we dare his fierce damnation, and deride his fiery vengeance. O when we hear him thus insulted, assailed, and defied,

we wonder that his lightning sleeps, that his red right hand, which flung the revolting angels down to hell, crushes not in sudden destruction the puny rebel, — that the shuddering earth does not swallow him up as it did the company of Korah, — that the caverns of the lost open not to receive so congenial a spirit among the blaspheming fiends ; for who is more worthy of the tortures which the damned suffer than he who pollutes the name of God with his foul lips ?

3. It is a sin against knowledge. In most other sins men may, at times, have doubts of their criminality. The profane swearer, if he knows the meaning of his words, cannot attempt such excuse. No one contends for the propriety of profaneness. No one defends it as necessary or pleasant. No one, who believes in God, can doubt its guilt. There is no need of study to detect, or of reasoning to prove its shamefulness. The command is too plain to be misunderstood : “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ;” and conscience, however hardened, acknowledges that “the Lord” should “not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

In other sins we may forget that God is nigh ; but the profane swearer, by the very terms of his oath, confesses that he is in God’s presence, acknowledges his power and the reality of his fearful curses on the guilty ; yet, in this spirit, he blasphemes. He sins wilfully, therefore foully ; intelligently, therefore inexcusably ; impudently, therefore desperately ; and when the wrath of God kindles unquenchable fires around his lost spirit, in the agonies of his despair and remorse, his wailing cry will be, “I have got that for which I prayed. I taunted God to do his worst. I called

for damnation and hell, and they are here. With my own hand I have plucked ruin down on my head and murdered my soul ! ”

4. It is a sin without temptation. Every other sin has some lure, some promised pleasure, some momentary gratification, some hoped-for worldly profit. The sensualist indulges luxuriously strong-impelling appetites ; avarice, fraud, and robbery aim at that wealth which purchases the things of this life ; revenge has a malicious satisfaction in paying back wrong with wrong ; falsehood seeks some end in deceiving, and the sophistry of the sceptic is an affected display of subtile acuteness, or of daring contrariety to established opinion. But profanity, especially common swearing and cursing, has no temptation to it except it be unmixed wickedness ; it is a luxury to no sense, it brings a man no gain, it acquires for him no credit, nor is there anything in our natural constitution impelling us to it. A profane swearer displays no talent, but rather proves his lack of power to express himself in decent words. A half-witted fool, a drunken vagabond, a brazen harlot, a vagrant child, can swear as well as he. He talks the most arrant nonsense ; he uses the most absurd phrases ; he fills his mouth with words that mean only vileness. Profanity is the forlorn expedient of an empty head and a depraved heart, the last resort of blundering silliness, the incoherence of frenzied rage. Does a jest want point ? It is sharpened by an oath. Is a story insipid ? A curse is the ever-ready seasoning. Is an argument defective, or an opponent's contradiction strong ? Blasphemy is an easy logic. Is an epithet wanting ? The swearer needs no rhetoric to supply it ; he has one ready for all occasions, — for hot

or cold, black or white, right or wrong, fair or ugly. Certainly, there is no intellectual temptation to this hateful, degrading habit. The swearer must acknowledge, that, were his words summed up, no one talks more aggregate absurdity ; and that, however wise in other respects, for the time he is a parrot-like babbler, or a vociferous dunce. What should we think of a judge swearing on the bench, an advocate in his plea, a senator in his place ? How should we regard an oath in a written treatise, or a formal speech ? Is there any wit, reasoning, fancy, or beauty in it ? Can it answer any purpose of instruction or delight ? What motive can there be for profanity ? It has nothing in it but a gross, stupid, devil-like contempt of all that good men love or deprecate. I have never heard any one defend it upon any principle ; and the only excuse ever offered is, that it has become an unthinking habit ; though some have owned themselves so lost to proper feeling that (to use their own expression) it did them good to swear when excited or irritated. “An unthinking habit !” The rapid growth and strength of such a habit is another proof of the enormous sin. “No one,” says the Roman satirist, “ever became very wicked at once.” So no one was ever naturally or without intentional practice a profane swearer. When he first attempted his awkward oath, he started and trembled lest the lightning of God would consume him on the spot, — his lips grew pale as he faltered out the fearful phrase ; but soon, emboldened by the divine forbearance, callous from custom, and shameless through practised effrontery, he tosses from his leprous tongue oath after oath still more and more daring, until he scarcely knows when he swears, and his conversation

teems with insulting defiances of his Maker. "Unthinking habit!" "Unthinking!" Is it not the privilege and dignity of a man to think? Wretched swearer, is there naught that can serve to supply your dearth of words but the titles of your good and mighty God? Naught to swell your impoverished speech but the judgments that will ere long, except you repent, crush your soul in eternal anguish? "Habit!" Does habit excuse a thief, a liar, a debauchee? Has habit so corrupted your heart and your lips, rendered you so familiar with the dialect of the blackguard, the drunkard, and the damned, that you cannot choose but blaspheme like a lost spirit before your time? O surely, of all fools that mock at sin and at God who avenges himself on the sinner, the profane swearer is the silliest, cheapest, maddest, nearest to hell! So far from getting the world in exchange for his soul, the swearer asks for his gratuitous condemnation. Well has old Herbert said: —

"Lust and wine plead pleasure; avarice, gain;
But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice,
Lets his soul run for nought."

5. It is a very corrupting sin. There is, perhaps, no vice that corrupts the heart more than profanity. Fear of God, or a belief in his retributive justice, tends more than anything else to preserve men in a course of virtue. "The denunciations of divine vengeance," says the eloquent Roscoe, as quoted by the great penal jurist of Louisiana, "when duly impressed on the mind, possess a sanction at which mere human authority can never arrive, and bring with it that certainty which alone and in all circumstances can prevent the perpetration of crime." This opinion is corroborated by

universal experience. Those who bow with the most sincere reverence before God, are uniformly most strictly true in their dealings with men. But how is this restraint lost by the profane swearer! That very name, which should excite his awe, is prostituted to a base familiarity. He cannot fear God who does not hesitate to sport with His most solemn titles, nor can he have any just apprehension of a future punishment who makes it a jest and a by-word. The floodgate of all iniquity is thus raised. I firmly believe that a profane man is not to be trusted, and that no reliance can rightly be placed on his integrity, except so far as a regard for human laws and social opinion may restrain him. He can have no abiding sense of virtue. There is many a bad man who does not swear, there are many hypocrites in religion; but the profane swearer avows himself to be wicked, and we know that he is without the fear of God before his eyes; and, without the fear of God, he can have no conscience.

This effect must be peculiarly great upon formal oaths in courts of justice, or in the assumption of office. "Rash swearing," says an old writer, "leads to false swearing." It is impossible that one who trifles with the name of God upon all occasions should feel the solemnity of an appeal to him when the legal oath is tendered. Penal statutes against perjury may restrain him, but the sanctity of the oath will not. The best decisions set aside as unworthy of belief the testimony of those who do not understand the nature of an oath, or who deny a future state of rewards and punishments. But how much more credit does a profane swearer deserve? He may understand what an oath is, but does he reverence it? He may believe in God and the

judgment, but his conversation proves that he worships him not, for his anger is with him a matter of ordinary ridicule. Is the oath of such a man any better or as good as his word?

6. This is farther seen in the fact that profaneness is the ordinary accompaniment of great depravity. Hell is full of curses; and they who are fitting themselves by other crimes for the companionship of devils, prepare themselves by practice to join in the profanity of their destined prison-house. The gambler swears over his cards and sweating-cloth. The brothel echoes with obscenity and profanity in turn or commingled. The bar-room rings with maudlin or frenzied blasphemy. It is the last incoherent mutter of the bloated, houseless drunkard, as he rolls into the kennel. The cells of a prison are filled with the curses of felons. It is rare to find a notorious villain, from the sneaking pickpocket to the murderer on the highway, that is not notoriously profane. If he be not, it is because he is such an adept in crime that he artfully lays aside what his cunning tells him is a sign of guilt. So no man is ever profane without losing, in some degree, the respect of others, even of the profane themselves. Although we may have before admired his demeanor, giving him credit for dignity and propriety, the moment an oath drops from his lips, he sinks in our regard, — he loses the air of a Christian, the high polish of a gentleman, the calm truthfulness of a wise man. This sentiment is general. If any of my hearers doubt it, let him ask himself whether there is any profane person of his acquaintance whom he truly esteems as a thoroughly good man, or whom he would not respect more if he were not profane? If he looks not on a profane child

as precociously depraved, or shudders not as an old man, tottering on the brink of the grave, perseveres in cursing and swearing?

7. It corrupts others besides the profane person himself. President Dwight well remarks that profanity is a social vice. "A man seldom swears when alone." The swearer corrupts his companions, familiarizes them with that which at first shocked and disgusted them. He swears in his family, his children imitate his baleful example, — the little one, whom perhaps the mother would teach to pray, has the paternal sanction for its lisping oath, and grows up nurtured in sin, consigned by a parent's murderous tongue to depravity and ruin. These in their turn spread the contagion, until distant generations and far-off lands feel the corrupting leaven, and stain with the blood of countless souls the skirts of the blasphemer. The profane swearer is thus a moral blight, a walking pestilence, a reckless madman, scattering, even among those he loves best, arrows, firebrands, and eternal death. O swearer, if you will invoke the curse of the Almighty, step aside from the crowd, that it may consume you alone!

Lastly. It is a sin against which God has declared his especial vengeance. You may count it a trifling fault; but is that trifling which is followed by such mischief? God is the Judge by whom our sins are to be weighed; and throughout the Scriptures he declares himself to be a jealous God, especially jealous for the honor of his name. As the moral Governor of the universe, he is particularly incensed against a sin so corrupting, so calculated to shake all sense of his authority, and evincing such ungrateful impiety in return for his goodness and patience and readiness to forgive.

You may think his punishment of a few idle words will not be severe. But he sets the enormity of the sin and the penalty of the sinner beyond all doubt when he utters the commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." God will keep his word. Awful, therefore, must be the punishment of the profane swearer in the eternal world, except he repent. Hell is certainly his portion. It is the ruin he has invoked, ridiculed, and defied. He is fitted by his character and habits for no other. Heaven is a place of holy, reverent, and adoring praise; hell, the abode of rebellion, despair, and blasphemy. Even there, his punishment will be fearfully great. "I will pour out my fury," saith the Lord, "upon them that despise my statutes." How terrible the thought! The mercy of the Lord turned to fury! The fury of the Lord!—and, then, the bitter reflection, more tormenting than the fire that is not quenched, more envenomed than the worm that never dies, that it is the swearer's own wickedness turned in fierce retribution upon him!

Let me entreat you, my friend, to avoid profaneness. It is easily avoided, yet, easily acquired; and when acquired, with difficulty laid aside. It is a virulent vice, spreading like a leprosy through the whole moral constitution of a man; for you cannot learn to swear without ceasing to pray, without despising the check of conscience, without becoming worse in every respect; since profaneness concentrates, in a few brief phrases, unholy rancor, determined rebellion, and reckless abandonment of your soul. It will bring you neither gain, credit, nor honor. It introduces you to the vilest com

panionship, and expels you from the society of the good as a self-branded Cain, the horror of all who fear God and practise virtue. It excludes you from the redemption of Christ, drives away the merciful Holy Ghost, and is the fore-doom of eternal perdition. Oh, swear not ! For your mother's sake, swear not ; for your friend's sake, swear not ; for society's sake, swear not ; for your own soul's sake, swear not ; for the sake of God who made you, for the sake of Christ who died for you, swear not. It is easy to forbear, but oh, how desperately wicked to commit such a sin !

Have you been, are you now, in the habit of profaneness ? Oh, lay it aside. You would be a gentleman, yet even the loose Chesterfield says a gentleman never swears ; consider how you wound and shock the ears and hearts of all religious people, though they but catch the offensive sound as they pass you in the street. I ask, as a favor which courtesy can readily grant, that they may not hear you speak lightly of their best Friend, their beloved Father, their venerated Sovereign. But I plead more for your own sake and the sake of those whom your example may influence. How good and how patient has God thus far been to you in not cutting you off at your word ! If he had done so, where were you now ? He may do it yet. Have you not insulted his forbearance long enough ? What has He done to provoke such insult, so gratuitous, so impudent ? Oh, my friend, it is mean, it is dishonorable thus to treat your Benefactor because he is so long-suffering ! Are you bent upon destroying your soul for the sake of uttering a vile word ?

Do not say that you cannot break the habit. Your occasional restraint belies your assertion. You would

not swear before a lady, or a clergyman. A slight respect for another human being's feelings checks the oath upon your lips. Have you less respect for God? You would not swear if you knew that God would strike you dead; why defy him who maintains you in life? Resolve now that not one more oath shall pass your lips, and you will leave this sacred place a truer gentleman, a better man, and, I trust, to become a happy Christian.

LECTURE XLVII.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH.



THIRTY-EIGHTH LORD'S DAY.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH.

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made.” — GENESIS ii. 2, 3.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” — EXODUS xx. 8-11.

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” — MARK ii. 27, 28.

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest.” — HEBREWS iv. 9-11.

IT was a principal, and the most fatal, error of the Jews, at the time of our Lord, that they expected the Messiah as a temporal prince, whose victorious prowess would establish them in the secure enjoyment of more than their former worldly advantages. Even the chosen disciples could not be persuaded that their Master's kingdom was not of this world, until the rejected and crucified of men had been received up into glory out of their sight. The error lay deeper than in a mistaken rendering of prophecy: it is radical in fallen, human nature, which, because the flesh has the mastery over the spirit, clings to earth instead of aspiring to

heaven. For this reason, all the teachings of our Lord and his apostles are after the pattern of that great evangelical command with its promise: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (those necessary for this present life) shall be added unto you." The eternal kingdom of God, with that righteousness by which alone we can attain it, is to be the first, the paramount, the constant object of our pursuit, while we trust contentedly in God to give us all of this world that he deems good for us as religious pilgrims, whose home and hearts are above, where Christ, our example and forerunner, sits at the right hand of the Father. But to use religion and its instrumental economy first for the enhancement of our worldly profit, is to make Christ the servant of our sensual idolatries after the fashion of those who, "destitute of the truth, suppose that gain is godliness." It is true, and we bless God for it, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come;" but it has promise of the life that now is, not as worldly men regard that life, and only as those estimate it whose treasure is in heaven. It is a lying promise of the devil, "the prince of this world," which says: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The declaration of him "who came from God and," having "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," "went to God," is: "In this world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The error of the Jews is rife among us. The Christian doctrine of Providence has taken a strong hold on men's outer convictions, while their hearts are insensi-

ble to “the power of an endless life”; and there is more than ever manifest a desire to serve God whom they dread, and Mammon whom they love, at the same time and by the same acts. Even Christians, eager to gain for religion the favor of the world, too often employ the jesuistry of holding forth, as a bribe, its worldly benefits. The true process of Christianity is to cut the root of human evils by converting the sinful heart through the faith of Christ; yet we waste great zeal in fertile attempts to lop off the branching vices. The genuine blessings of Christianity are fruits of the Spirit; and vain are all efforts to graft them upon the carnal will which is planted in the earth. Mere moral reforms, or schemes to create an outward shape, a counterfeit semblance of Christian virtue, draw away no small share of our strength from the spread of that gospel which is “the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation,”—salvation here, because it is salvation hereafter,—salvation from the power as well as from the punishment of sin. The regenerating doctrine of the cross, against which men stumble, is not seldom thrust into a corner of the pulpit by professed preachers of our religion, while its temperance, its social purity, its political value, or its liberating tendencies are heralded, as though heaven was to be in this world, and eternity of less consideration than time, or our duty to God rendered only when our wages are in our hand. The holy Sabbath, God’s own day, the blessing of our spiritual nature, the earnest of our immortality, the type of eternal satisfaction, has not escaped this ill-ordered logic. Christian tongues grow proudly eloquent upon its temporal excellence, summoning all philosophy to prove the physical benefits

of the mere rest from toil, without, and apart from its sacredness, as recommendations of its observance to the servant of the world. These arguments, very valuable when supplementary and subordinate, have been set in such undue prominence as to check our wonder, when men, perverting the Scripture that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," claim its sacred hours as their own, in which they may comfort themselves after the week's labor with a day of idle pleasure, to the neglect of his worship who set it apart for that holy end. Let us, at this time, elevate ourselves to a higher range of thought, and urge the authority of the Sabbath from those principles upon which it is founded in the word of God. The main drift of our discourse will, therefore, be to consider THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH; for, that being ascertained, it is easy to infer how the Sabbath should be kept.

The simple fact that God has solemnly enjoined upon us a devout observance of the Sabbath, were enough to demonstrate that it is our duty and our interest, even if we were unable to discover any of the reasons for which the Sabbath was ordained. God, our Creator and Sovereign, has a supreme right to direct and control us in the use of our time; as our kind and wise Father, who loves his human children and perfectly understands our nature, would give us no directions but such as must certainly tend to the best welfare of all who obey him. The Sabbath, therefore, cannot be otherwise than a most just and beneficial arrangement: just, as regards our obligations to God, — beneficial, as regards our own happiness.

But the circumstances in which God was pleased to

set apart the Sabbath, and his subsequent revelations concerning it, greatly enhanced its claims.

I. In the fourth commandment given on Sinai, God speaks of the Sabbath as already known, and its observance as already most solemnly enjoined, — “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy ;*” — and he carries us back to its institution on the seventh day from the beginning of the world. Referring to the sacred narrative, we learn that on the sixth day, after God had completed the inferior creation, he made man ; “in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them ;” and, having commanded them to be “fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” he gave them dominion over all his terrestrial works. “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.” . . . “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it ; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Here we note several most important facts : —

1. The Sabbath is coeval with creation, antecedent to Christianity, to Judaism, and even to sin, which required the salvation promised at the gate of Eden. There were, therefore, reasons for the Sabbath in the fundamental relations between God and man, and in the original, not merely the acquired, necessities of human nature.

2. The Sabbath is *holy*. To hallow, to make holy, and to sanctify, are, as we all know, synonymous scriptural expressions, signifying to set apart for God. God

himself hallowed the Sabbath to himself. He made it, claimed it, sealed it, as his own. The primary reason why he sanctified it, was because "He rested on the seventh day from all his works." Hence the commandment declares that "the seventh day is *the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*," and, throughout the Scriptures, God calls the Sabbath *his Sabbath*. The entire eternity of God is holy, and with him, strictly speaking, there is no succession of time; therefore he did not set apart the Sabbath for his own use. The life of the blessed angels is a perpetual Sabbath; therefore the seventh day had no reference to them. God hallowed it, because on that day he rested from the creation of which he made man the delegated head; therefore its sanctification was enjoined upon man. All the time of man belongs to God, and at all times man is to render God service. But there are duties which man is to render God mediately, — that is, through the creatures of God with whom he is put in relation by his Creator, as the social and personal virtues called for by his moral circumstances; and there are duties which he is to render God immediately, as adoration, praise, and worship. So at the very beginning of man's life, and after God had assigned him his mediate duties, the Creator hallowed every seventh day of man's time as especially, peculiarly, immediately, and only the Lord's. In the six days he was to do all his work; but the seventh he was to set apart for the worship of his Maker and Sovereign, in which he should commemorate the creation gratefully, acknowledging the author of his being, the giver of all good, as his owner, his master, and his judge. "Hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a *sign* between me and you, that ye may know that I am

the Lord your God." The Sabbath, therefore, though made for man, is not man's, but the Lord's.

3. The Sabbath was *blessed*. The Sabbath, being mere time, is incapable of receiving blessing, and its blessedness must mean its being an occasion on which, and an institution through which, special blessings are conferred. Thus the Scriptures speak of "a field which the Lord hath blessed," signifying that the Lord had made it abundantly fruitful. The Sabbath is the Lord's, but it is made for man, that in keeping it aright he may, according to the benevolent purpose and wise economy of God, enjoy in the Sabbath, on the Sabbath, and from the Sabbath, peculiarly rich and abounding blessings. God ever dispenses his blessings to us through our use of appointed means, and the Sabbath was a special means in his use of which man, even before his sin, was blessed of God. The holy character of the Sabbath, its purpose, and the manner in which it is to be kept, distinctly show the nature of its blessings. The seventh-day rest from labor is, indeed, itself a blessing, fruitful of countless temporal blessings; but these are rather contingent and incidental. Abstinence from labor is enjoined in order to the keeping of the Sabbath separate for its peculiar purpose, the worship of God; and that being the special purpose of the Sabbath, its peculiar blessings spring from the worship of God within its sacred hours. The six days are appointed for man's labor in the world, connected, it is true, as all the affairs of this life are, with his higher, religious well-being; the Sabbath is set apart for the culture of his higher, religious interests, connected, as they manifestly are, with his best temporal welfare. A blessing of God is upon the labors of his true servants throughout the six

days; but the Sabbath sheds from God its appropriate blessings on man's worship of God. There are spiritual blessings connected with man's (so-called) secular work, because that work is duty to God; but those blessings are rather incidental, not peculiar. There are secular blessings connected with man's holy use of the Sabbath, for it is closely related to his secular time; but they are rather incidental, not peculiar. The blessing on the week may overflow into the Sabbath; the blessing on the Sabbath may overflow into the week; but the week and the Sabbath has each its blessing proper to itself. Man is dependent upon God for the supply of his wants as a dweller in this world; he is dependent upon God for the supply of his wants as a spiritual, religious, and immortal being. So far, then, as his spiritual are distinguishable from his physical interests, his religious from his secular, his immortal from his temporal, the blessings of the Sabbath are distinguishable from those of the week. The one regards him as separated from the affairs of this life, and in close communion with God; the other as still in communion with God, but busy amidst the affairs of this life. Therefore we infer that the Sabbath was made for man as a spiritual, religious, and immortal creature; so the Sabbath has no promise of blessing except when so used.

Such is the pressure of temporal cares, temptations, and distractions, that, were man left to its unrelieved, uninterrupted force, he would inevitably become forgetful of his higher welfare, and "quite lose the divine quality of his first being," forgetful of God in occupation with God's creatures, forgetful of his soul in attention to his body, forgetful of eternity in his anxiety for time.

So God, while he insists upon our constant religion, has set apart the Sabbath for the direct worship of himself, that during its hallowed rest man might meditate upon his Creator and the great purposes of his creation. The Sabbath is thus an endowment of the soul, an ordinance of religion, an earnest of immortality. There can be, after the gospel, no blessing so high as that of the Sabbath, no privilege so great as that which it affords, no dignity so noble as that to which it introduces us. It is, therefore, a most illogical mistake, as well as a grave sacrilege, to make the Sabbath a mere temporal convenience, or to expect a genuine blessing from it when not used for spiritual profit.

This consideration is heightened by the fact, that

4. The Sabbath was *introduced by the example of God*.

God needed no rest, yet he rested on the seventh day. It was for man that he thus consecrated the Sabbath by his divine conduct as well as command. God rested like man, that man might rest like God. Man was made in the image of God; therefore, as he was a "partaker of the divine nature," was he made to partake of the divine blessedness, and God shared with him his rest. Man was constituted the representative vicegerent of God over the mundane creation; therefore the Sabbath was set apart, that he might enter into close fellowship and council with God, the supreme Lord. Man was God's own dear child; therefore God on the Sabbath calls him up to rest on his Father's bosom, to enjoy a festival in his Father's house, and to receive an earnest, as the heir, of his Father's kingdom. Nowhere, except in God's taking upon him human nature, is there such an assurance that man may be-

come like his God as the Sabbath. The rest is, therefore, spiritual; for "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary"; his rest was not because of fatigue from his work; neither is rest from labor the peculiar rest of the Sabbath. As man has a double nature, — a material frame as well as a spiritual soul, — rest may have been needful for his body even before his sin, and certainly is necessary now that death has passed upon him; but such rest is not the rest into which he enters with God: it is, at the best, only supplementary and auxiliary to the rest of his spirit. So it follows that only by a godly use of the Sabbath, in imitation of God and fellowship with him, do we secure its end and attain its blessings. It is then, and then only, a reimpression of God's likeness, a reconferring of God's authority, a reconfirmation of his sonship to the Father, a reinforcement of his title to immortal life.

5. The Sabbath *was laid at the foundation of human morals*. God ordained it in the very beginning of man's relations and responsibilities. He did not allow man to exist a whole day, or to enter fairly upon his various offices, before he had kept a Sabbath with his God; so important to man did the Creator and Law-giver consider that sacred day, as a *preparation* for his discharge of his relative duties. The reasons for this are obvious.

The duties of man to himself, to his fellows, and to the inferior creatures result from and are included by his duty to God. The law of God is the sole rule that determines, orders, and appoints the manner in which his virtues are to be exercised. He owes no duty to the creatures of God, nor any allegiance to human law

or authority, except as such duty has been enjoined upon him by God, and such allegiance has been directed by the divine precepts. An observation of the Sabbath, therefore, is appointed as an acknowledgment that all his time belongs to God, and that God alone has a right to direct him in the use of his time. It is like the offering of the first-fruits, in token that the whole harvest belongs to God, though the divine proprietor graciously permits the faithful husbandman to reap its blessings for himself. The fear and love and knowledge of God are necessary to establish and maintain in man's heart a right sense of his responsibility for all his conduct, and to cultivate a kindliness of spirit and love of virtue by a contemplation of his divine pattern. He cannot regard his fellow-men as his brothers, except as he regards God as his and their Father; nor can he be sensible of the duties which he owes to the inferior creatures, except as he considers them belonging to God, his Creator and theirs. He cannot exercise his delegated authority aright, except in humble conformity to the example of the great Supreme. Therefore God has appointed the Sabbath for man, in which he is commanded to worship the Creator and Sovereign, to muse on the power and wisdom and goodness which have given him and all things being, to acquaint himself with the divine will, and to study, with adoring docility, the character of God in the structure of his works, the economy of his providence, and the revelations of his truth. Every well-kept Sabbath is thus a fresh return of man to God for instruction and strength to discharge his duty; and also a repeated anticipation of his rendering an account at the great day of the manner in which he has discharged his duty.

All the binding force that religion has over morals, is thus concentrated and made immediately applicable in a right use of the Sabbath. Not to remember the Sabbath, is not to remember God; and to forget God, is to forget the obligations of virtue. In this high sense has the Sabbath been made for man. As his happiness is inseparable from virtue, and virtue inseparable from religion, the Sabbath, on which both are specially cultivated, is a confirmation and security of man's highest good. Hence (we may observe in passing) experience has proved that where the Sabbath has been best kept, sound notions of morality, and the practice of virtue, personal and social, have most prevailed, because there the fear and love of God are the paramount motives of men's conduct. He only who remembers the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, will remember to keep himself holy; for the Sabbath is not only a means of moral strength, but also a test of moral sincerity.

Such, beloved brethren, is the doctrine of the holy Sabbath, as taught by God in the beginning, when he sanctified it for his own honor, and blessed it for the good of man.

When the almighty, all-wise, and all-bountiful Creator had finished his divine works, and had crowned man, the chiefest of them all, the head of our humanity, with radiations of his own glory and honor, we are told his infinite bosom glowed with especial satisfaction and delight. What, then, must have been the adoring, admiring, grateful transports of the holy creature man, whose sudden being was made illustrious with such majesty amidst such scenes of grandeur and loveliness! Perfect as were his pure frame and innocent spirit, the wonders and occupations crowded into the first day of

his existence rendered a day of rest welcome, if not necessary. He needed its sacred hours to consider his novel and eminent position ; to confer with his Parent-Sovereign ; to offer him solemn homage and glad thanks ; to receive the sympathy of his Original, of whose infinite wisdom and authority and love and will he was the finite image. When, therefore, after the sleep of a night had composed his powers, overwhelmed though not worn by excess of rapture, he woke to look again upon his fair and magnificent kingdom, his Creator's creation and his Father's gift, — when through the rising odorous mists of fertile Eden he saw the morning sun, like a benediction from the burning throne, shine streaming down on forests and fields and waters, and on the countless tribes of air and land and sea, all active, fearless, and happy in their fresh life, and he lifted up his heart and voice to the invisible Lord whom he loved, — the sanctity of the Godhead's Presence was bowed with the glory of heaven to enshrine the unpolluted earth, Father and child rested in “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” Then was “the Sabbath made for man” ; then did he “enter into the joy of his Lord” ; then did he drink of the rivers of the divine pleasures ; then did he glow with filial satisfactions in the reflecting of his Father's glory, and exult in the privilege of ruling all for his Father's praise.

But there shall dawn another Sabbath, a Sabbath made for man, far exceeding its beautiful type in glory, praise, and sacred rest.

This leads us to consider, as we proposed,

II. *The subsequent revelations of the Divine Word concerning the Sabbath.*

If the Sabbath was necessary for man innocent, when his body was immortal and his spirit holy, much more must it be so for man fallen, since sin has planted thorns and briers in the ground, cursed for his sake, and he eats his bread in the sweat of his face ; and his heart has become prone to forget God, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ;" and with all the grace of the gospel his whole life is required to prepare for his eternal future ? But God, who is rich in mercy, did not forget his sinful children, nor take from them the Sabbath blessing. The promise of salvation was given at the very gate of Eden, and so we have sufficient reason to believe that the Sabbath was kept by the true worshippers of God until the giving of the law by Moses ; for the fourth commandment bade them "*remember* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and for the same reason assigned as at the beginning, clearly assuming that its sanctification had been always known and enjoined. That the Sabbath was known and recognized as a divine institution, is put beyond doubt by what we read in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, 22-29, where, after the giving of the manna, with the command to gather on the sixth day the portion necessary for the seventh, Moses said : " . . . To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord ; bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe ; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade ; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day ; for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord : to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it ; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it .

there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place: let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Here the Sabbath is spoken of as known to be one of God's commandments and laws, and that, because it was so, God required them to refrain even from gathering manna, at the same time taking from them all temptation to disobey. It was commanded to the Israelites, not as a peculiar people merely, but as men and creatures of God, whose God, notwithstanding their sins, he declared himself to be. It was no part of the ceremonial law, separately given afterwards to them as the circumcised nation; but is fixed permanently in that moral code, every precept of which is binding upon all men, because, as we have seen, the Sabbath lies at the very foundation of sound morals.

Yet it must be noted, that, for another and special reason, its observation is enforced upon the Jewish people: "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day" (Deut. v. 15). On the Sabbath-day they were to remember God their Creator, because they were men, but also to remember him as their deliverer, because they were Israelites; and to meditate thankfully on his attributes displayed in crea-

tion, and on his attributes combined in the mercy that effected their transfer from the wretchedness of Egypt to the inheritance of the promised land. So, throughout the Old Testament it is declared, that by their sanctification of the Sabbath, as a covenant sign, they were to know the Lord as indeed their God; and from it, as a means, every blessing, spiritual and temporal, was to come upon them.

But, my brethren, as you well know, the covenant of God with the Abrahamic nation was typical of his covenant with his true Israel, their deliverance out of Egypt; of that Israel's redemption from sin with all its consequences, and their establishment in Canaan; of the rest remaining in eternity to the people of God. Therefore do we, as Christians, keep holy the Sabbath-day, that we may glorify God our Redeemer, meditate upon the greatness of his gracious power in accomplishing the atonement through which we live, and anticipate in lively hope our full salvation in the rest above.

Nay, we fetch our warrant for this evangelical use of the Sabbath from a great type at the beginning, for the redemption by Christ is the more glorious antitype of creation itself. The redemption of the church is emphatically styled "a new creation," and the believer "a new creature," "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," his new life breathed into him by the Holy Spirit; and as man was made in "the likeness of God," so the new man is renewed in "knowledge," "righteousness and true holiness after the image of him that created him." The first Adam was the head of his race, and was owned as the Son of God. So is the IMMANUEL constituted the Head of his church, the sec-

ond Adam of a spiritual seed, all of whom by him are children of God. Adam was made lord over earth, so the second Adam is "head over all things to his church," and his people are all "kings unto God," for they are of the seed-royal. The very name of man's original happy dwelling-place is given to that home of delight where the church shall be complete in bliss eternal, for Paradise is the exact translation of Eden, the garden of the Lord; and thither has the second Adam, our Forerunner, our Elder Brother, for us entered, and sits crowned with glory and honor, the representative of man again made perfect. Therefore we keep the Christian Sabbath, and, according to apostolical example, on the first day of the week, because that was the first day after the new creation by the finished atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross, — the day on which he rested, and blessed his people, after all his work, as the Redeemer. This involves no change of the Sabbath's nature: it is still a seventh day, — a day holy to the Lord, — a day of rest; but it adds to the motive of honoring God the Creator, the one still higher and more precious to the Christian, of honoring God the Saviour, and to the commemoration of God's work in the beginning, the anticipation of his final glory in the perfectness of his church on high. We are justified in the change, for God the Creator hath given all power in heaven and earth to God incarnate as the Saviour, "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath-day," and the first day of the week is the Lord's day, in which we honor the Son even as we honor the Father. Thus, my brethren, the voice of God our Creator speaks to us from the beginning of human existence, commanding us to hallow the Sab-

bath for his glory and our own good ; and God the Saviour, standing beside his broken tomb, repeats the injunction, with all the arguments of his devoted love. He, who on the first Sabbath blessed man by admitting him to communion with himself, on the day after the second creation came into the midst of his chosen, saying, "Peace be unto you," and "breathed upon them the Holy Ghost." All the mighty wonders of the past, all the greater wonders of the eternal future, crowd around the sacred day. It is beautiful with the light that shone on happy Eden, illustrious with the glory of rejoicing heaven. As its fresh morning breaks upon our souls, we seem to hear the morning stars singing together, and all the sons of God shouting for joy ; then, mingling with their chorus, "like the voice of many waters," the hallelujahs of the church of the first-born around "the throne of the Lamb that was slain." The primal Sabbath bowed heaven down to earth ; the Christian Sabbath lifts earth up to heaven. The first Sabbath crowned the blessings of creation ; the second Sabbath crowns the blessings of redemption. The original Sabbath reminded man of his creation ; ours assures him that he is immortal. The one called innocent man from his pleasant work to the higher delight of communion with God his Maker ; the other offers us, in our sinful weakness, a refuge from the toils of a tempting world, that we may, while yet on earth, anticipate eternal rest above in communion with God our Saviour. How foully, then, do we profane the divine ordinance, how completely pervert it from its holy purpose, when we abuse the privilege of its release from secular cares into a license for ungodly idleness !

There is another idea belonging to the Sabbath, taught in the last of the texts which we chose for the scriptural foundation of our argument. "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, hath ceased from his own works as God did from his. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." Here is an assurance, drawn from the previous argument of the inspired writer, that the people of God shall have an eternal rest. Then the character of that rest is given, inasmuch as the people of God rest from their works as God did from his. And a practical inference is stated in the form of an exhortation that we should labor in order to attain the eternal rest.

Man, at the first, was created a child of God in his own right, and had he been faithful to the covenant, which made a continuance of the divine favor contingent upon his obedience, all his posterity would have been the people of God. Formed as a finite likeness of the infinite God, the employment assigned him was as much like that of God as a creature's could resemble the Creator's. He could originate nothing: that is the prerogative of the Supreme; but he could employ the creatures of God, inferior to himself, for the same end as that for which God had made them, the Creator's glory; therefore did he receive from God a vice-regal authority and control over all the inferior creation. "Thou hast put," saith the Psalmist, "all things under his feet." Hence, as God rested from his works as the Creator, it was necessary to carry out man's resemblance of God, that he also should have a rest from his peculiar works. Therefore was the Sabbath appointed that he might rest with God, and only in proportion,

but certainly in proportion as his works resembled in holy zeal and purpose the works of God, was he prepared for sympathy with the rest of God.

Man fell, and with all his posterity lost the divine image; and no more are we, by our own natural right, the people of God, nor are we entitled to the Sabbath-rest, or fitted for its enjoyment, since the original sympathy between God and man is destroyed.

The mercy of God in the redemption has repaired for all believers the breach of the apostasy. Regenerated man again resembles God as to his nature, employment, and rest. He takes the same place in the new creation as that which he held and lost in the first; but so much more gloriously and securely as the second creation excels the former. The second covenant (commonly called the covenant of grace) is, in effect, a continuance of the first covenant (commonly called the covenant of works), for life is still given on condition of obedience. The Son of God, made flesh, for the performance of human duties and the endurance of human suffering, comes, according to divine appointment, as the second Adam, in the station vacated by the first. The covenant is renewed with him, acting on behalf of believers, who are called by the prophet Isaiah "his seed." The reward of the first covenant was of mere man's obedience, therefore finite, and, for the same reason, perishable; but the new life under the gospel is the reward of Christ, the IMMANUEL's infinitely meritorious righteousness, therefore is it incomparably glorious and infallibly eternal. Earth is too narrow, time too short, to contain it; therefore is its scene transferred to an everlasting heaven. So, also, is the image of God renewed immortally and far more

illustriously in the believer's soul, because he derives it from his personal union to the only-begotten Son of God, his Elder Brother, and it is perpetually maintained by the ever-living Spirit of God dwelling in him. Thus are all believers united and owned and blessed in Christ as the people of God ; and eventually the whole church will be glorified with Christ in God, throughout the rest eternal.

But the new creation, like the first, is gradual, not instantaneous. It is, for wise reasons, (some of which are known and might be given had we the time,) progressive, both as respects the individual believer and the church. This creation Christ, on the part of God, being the representative of the Godhead, is carrying on by his almighty power ; and, on the part of his church, being the representative of his people, by his delegated authority as the second Adam, "under whose feet are put all things." Again ; in Christ, according to the true sense of his scriptural title, "the First-born of every creature," is regenerated man made heir and lord of all things, which he is bound to use for the glory of the Creator. He takes the same place in the new creation that he held in the first. God, by Christ, employs his instrumentality for the furtherance of his grand purpose. God put man in Eden, to keep it and to dress it ; but he assigns to the Christian a far more noble and ennobling employment. By our prayers, our obedience, our example, and our zeal, he condescends to convert sinners and edify believers in their sanctifying faith. The Christian is a worker together with God. "God worketh in him both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." The new creation is yet going on. Soon it will be accomplished, and the

almighty Saviour rest from his work. Jesus finished his personal work on earth, and entered into his rest as the Forerunner of his people. Each believer, as he finishes his work on earth, follows his Master and rests from his labors as Christ did from his. But though the work of Christ to be accomplished on earth was finished in his death, his providential work, a great part of which he performs by the agency of his people, will not be perfected until the church be complete in glory. Until then, the church must labor. When it is accomplished, Christ and his people will rest together. God shall again behold all that it is very good, and that Sabbath dawn whose sun shall no more go down. Then shall they who have shared in the work, share in the joy of their Lord. As he beholds with infinite complacency the results of his efficient grace, "the mighty working by which he is now subduing all things to himself," they shall sympathize with his satisfaction as the honored instruments of his power. The triumphs of the Redeemer will be their triumphs, and, while they give him all the glory, they will share his reward. Every good act done, every good word spoken, every good purpose cherished and prayed for, every sinner they have brought to Christ, every Christian they have assisted on his way to heaven, will give them a deeper fellowship with him who shall have redeemed all, converted all, sanctified all, and glorified all. As the divine Father looks over heaven filled with immortal trophies of his mercy, and the divine Son "sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied," and the divine Spirit sheds light and peace and love through all the spirits he has made perfect, the faithful Christian shall drink abundantly of the rivers of the divine pleas-

ure, for "he shall rest from his own works as God doth from his." What an argument and encouragement for us to labor that we may enter into that rest in which the ungodly and the slothful can have no part.

The Sabbaths of the church on earth are so many successive stations, from whose Pisgah-like eminences we may look back on the work we have done, and forward to the reward of glory promised. Only as we are faithful fellow-workers with Christ can we enter into the eternal rest of heaven; so, only as we work for Christ, are we prepared and entitled to enjoy the rest of the Sabbath. The rest of heaven is holy in communion with God; so only may we keep the Sabbath on earth. The Sabbath now, "having," like the old law, "a shadow of good things to come," is not a perfect rest, because it is but a day, and, being followed by a secular week, must be used as a preparation for work before us: the rest of heaven is complete; its "sun shall no more go down"; the people of God shall no more go out into temptation and toil; they rest from all their labors, and their faithful works do follow them.

Thus we have the clear and consonant testimony of all Scripture to the divine purpose of the Sabbath, — that it is a purely religious ordinance, for the glory of God in the adoring worship of man, and for the spiritual benefit of man, in its sanctifying power over his life on earth, and, therefore, his preparation to enter an immortal blessedness beyond the grave.

From the whole subject a multitude of important practical inferences might be drawn. We have time but for a few of the most comprehensive.

FIRST : *Caution in arguing the value of the Sabbath from its mere temporal benefits.*

As a rest from toil, a day on which the weary bearer may lay aside the burden from his aching shoulders; the laborer look up, wash from his face the dusty sweat, and stand erect the equal of his master by the proclamation of God; and even the patient beasts, that all the week have slaved for man's convenience or luxury, may be free from the yoke; as a glad festival, during whose emancipated hours the thought of work is an injury and a profanation, the Sabbath is beautiful. The ingenuity of man has discovered nothing so beautiful. Neither may we doubt that its periodical repose, when legitimately accepted, especially with the cleanliness it suggests, is necessary for the repair of animal energy and mental vigor; or that work on the Sabbath is in the main not only a hindrance but a loss. It is the poor man's property, the rich man's benefit, the dumb brute's right, and a luxury for all; a golden link brightening at brief intervals the chain of our iron days, the happy memento of the primal age when no curse had blighted our earth's spontaneous fertility. Yet should we never, even by implication, allow the thought already too common, that the Sabbath, though made for man, is not the Lord's but man's to dispose of as he lists; a convenience granted, which he may use or not, as he chooses, instead of an ordinance, the sanction of which he is bound to obey; a prescribed grace to his soul rather than to his body, and to his body as the unconscious servant of his spirit. By such a line of argument we move the question of its observance from under divine authority, and make it one of industrial economies, which outwork themselves most health-

fully when least constrained by artificial rules, or those not imposed upon them unalterably by the Author of providence.

Besides, the absence of necessity for work, mere leisure, simple idleness, so far from being by itself, even rarely, a blessing, is rather, as all experience shows, a provocation to sensual indulgence and wasteful crime, especially among the ignorant and toilworn, who have few luxuries within their reach, and less opportunity to enjoy them. We cannot be awake and be wholly inactive. Our compound nature is never safe, except when moral knowledge and moral principle strengthen the spirit to master the flesh. This is the great virtue of the Sabbath. Because on that day, and that day alone, the schools of religion and morality are open to all, and all have leisure to attend them, the Sabbath is a blessing to a truly Christian people. When it is not so observed, it becomes a curse, especially for those who need its physical rest the most. There has been much finely said by superficial, though well-meaning philanthropists, and even some excellent Christians, as to the unmercifulness of shutting up the hard-worked poor, particularly of crowded cities, within the walls of churches or their own homes on the day of rest, when they should be free to walk abroad, or avail themselves of steamboat and railroad that they may enjoy the fresh works of God, or wile away the pleasant hours with innocent pastimes. But, saying little of the injustice to the many who are made, by such practices, greater slaves on the Sabbath than on any other day for the convenience of the rest, we are clear in believing that the Sabbath-keeping, church-going poor have the best enjoyment of its sacred hours, and go freshest, cheer-

fullest, happiest to their work on the Monday morning. That keenly satirical moralist, Hogarth, has well set this forth in his contrasted pictures of Sunday Morning and Sunday Evening, where the reeling father, the flushed, bedraggled wife, and the tired, blubbered child, who had gone out together for a day's pleasure, tell the miserable story of a broken Sabbath. What must be their Monday morning, with its empty purse, its aching heads, and surly remorse! A poor Christian family has spent the day in thankful peace; gone in their clean, though humble raiment to the house of God, joined in the sacred harmony, — to them a richer treat than the most artistic concert to our fastidious ears, — listened to the elevating gospel, emphatically theirs, because preached first to them by the carpenter of Nazareth, and, after the sanctity of household devotion, laid themselves down to unfevered sleep. They shall awake in the morning rested and strong, vigorous from a sense of duty, cheered by divine sympathy, and reconciled to all life's trying urgencies by the hope of a Sabbath sinless and eternal. If the laborer must have a holiday, — and I, for one, would be far from refusing it, — let him take it from the six; but oh! encourage him not to trample upon the Sabbath, the memorial of Eden, the prelibation of Heaven! Press, also, close upon the consciences of those who force or bribe their fellow-servants to toil during the sacred rest, not only their cruel robbery of the poor man's right, scanty enough at the best, but still more earnestly their wrong of society in depriving him of moral culture, their outrage upon his heart in shutting up his access to God, and their murder of his soul in tempting him to sin, and the neglect of the best means for attaining everlasting rest.

SECONDLY: *Reliance upon the truth and Spirit of God only, for the vindication and enforcement of this ordinance of God.*

The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath ; but his kingdom is not of this world. Every bond by which, in our impatience, we would unite religion to secular power, is hurtful. The world will use the church for its own purposes, but never keep its part of the unjustifiable covenant. Something may seem to be due us on the score of protection in our rights as Christian citizens, but Christians should be chary of enforcing their rights. We are the few among the many ; and the time-servers who deprecated our favor before we drew out our line of battle, will laugh us to scorn when they see our weakness. Our moral influence, by the blessing of God upon the authorized means, is great, but the moment we fight with carnal weapons we shall be put to the worst. The devil and his allies are impregnable on his own ground ; we can destroy his defences only from the superior heights of truth and love.

The Sabbath, with its ordinances, has by divine grace the inherent power to establish itself. By its moral teachings, its faithful warnings, and hope-inspiring promises drawn from the almighty word of God, it can draw men to worship around the cross which it uplifts, when force can make but reluctant hypocrites or profane idlers. The gospel, the pure gospel, the gospel in its light and love, is “ the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.” Give the gospel to the Sabbath, and the gospel will save the Sabbath. We lose time, we waste energy, and corrupt our faith, when we attempt to accomplish religious good by any other method.

THIRDLY: *Wise diligence in setting a proper example of honor to the Sabbath-day.*

Our faithful manifestation of regard for its holy purposes and edifying privileges will do more than mere words to compel for it the respect of our fellow-men. It is the example of Christians which is their light in the world, the leaven which, by the grace of God, is to leaven the whole mass. But let it be a proper example of the Sabbath, — proper to its character, its commemorations, and its revelations of hope. It is the day which the Lord hath made, that we may rejoice and be glad in it. It is essentially a festival. Even on a fast-day, God, by his prophet, forbids us to hang down our head, like a bulrush, and by his Son commands us to wash our face and anoint our head: how much more on the Sabbath-day? As men are unnecessarily prejudiced against the gospel by a self-righteous asceticism, the very opposite of evangelical liberty, so are they repelled from the Sabbath by a pragmatistical gloom and severity. Be it our care to show men that we hold the Sabbath to be “a delight”; and that when the Lord lifts upon us, with its sacred morning, “the light of his countenance,” “there is gladness in our hearts more than” in theirs “when their corn and their wine abound.” It is the day of communion with God, when heaven is opened that we may see Jesus at the right hand of his Father; therefore should our faces shine as those of happy angels. It is the day on which the grace of the Spirit flows down from the head of our High Priest over all his church; therefore should all her garments be fragrant with the name of Jesus. It is the foretaste of eternal joy; therefore should we look up, the happiest of the happy.

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ON THE
CATECHISM.

* Translated into German. † A German title to a Holland Writer.
‡ A Holland Translation.

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(As this was probably the first American contribution to the literature of the Catechism, the title is given entire. The title-page bears no date; but at the end of a short introduction to the work occurs the following: —

“Aldus gegeven in Nieuw-York den 24. April 1706.

V. ANTONIDES,

Eccl. in Midwoud, &c.

HENRICUS BEYS,

V. D. M. in Kingstowne.”)

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(This work was not prepared for the press by Ursinus himself, but originally by some of his pupils, from notes taken by them, of his lectures. The first edition seems to have been published at Leyden in 1584, and was followed by several others. They abounded in errors and discrepancies; and hence Pareus, at the request of many by whom he was judged to be peculiarly fitted for the task, carefully revised the whole work and caused it to be published, with the title given above, at Heidelberg in 1591. Several other editions appeared subsequently. The two immediately following are titles of English translations.)

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